

LONE WOLF AND CUB

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VOLUME 25

PERHAPS
IN DEATH

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



孟連水狼

LONE WOLF

AND



CUB

story

KAZUO KOIKE

art

GOSEKI KOJIMA



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DANA LEWIS
lettering & retouch
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publisher
MIKE RICHARDSON
editor
TIM ERVIN
assistant editor
JEREMY BARLOW
consulting editor
TOREN SMITH for STUDIO PROTEUS
book design
DARIN FABRICK
art director
MARK COX

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PERHAPS IN DEATH

*By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA*

子連れ狼



VOLUME
25

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yuruishi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB

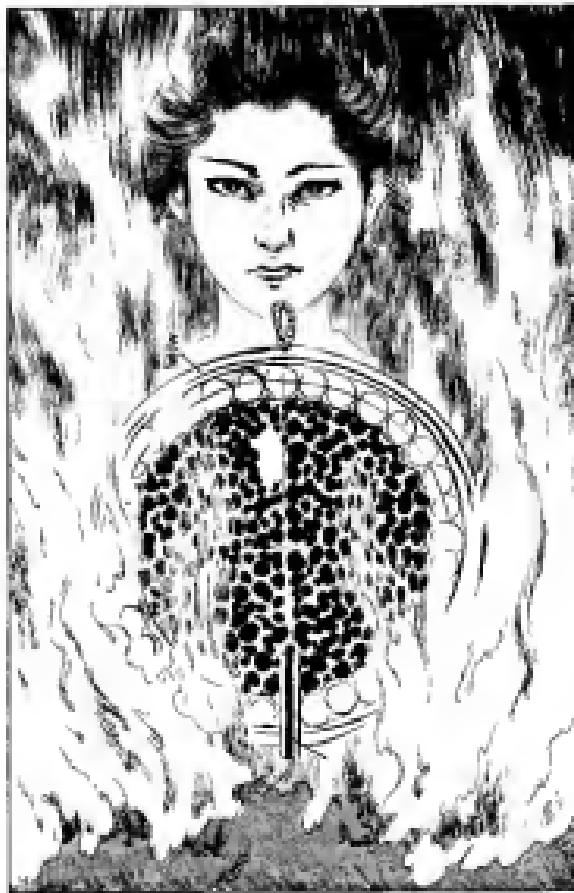


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the hundred and
twenty-second

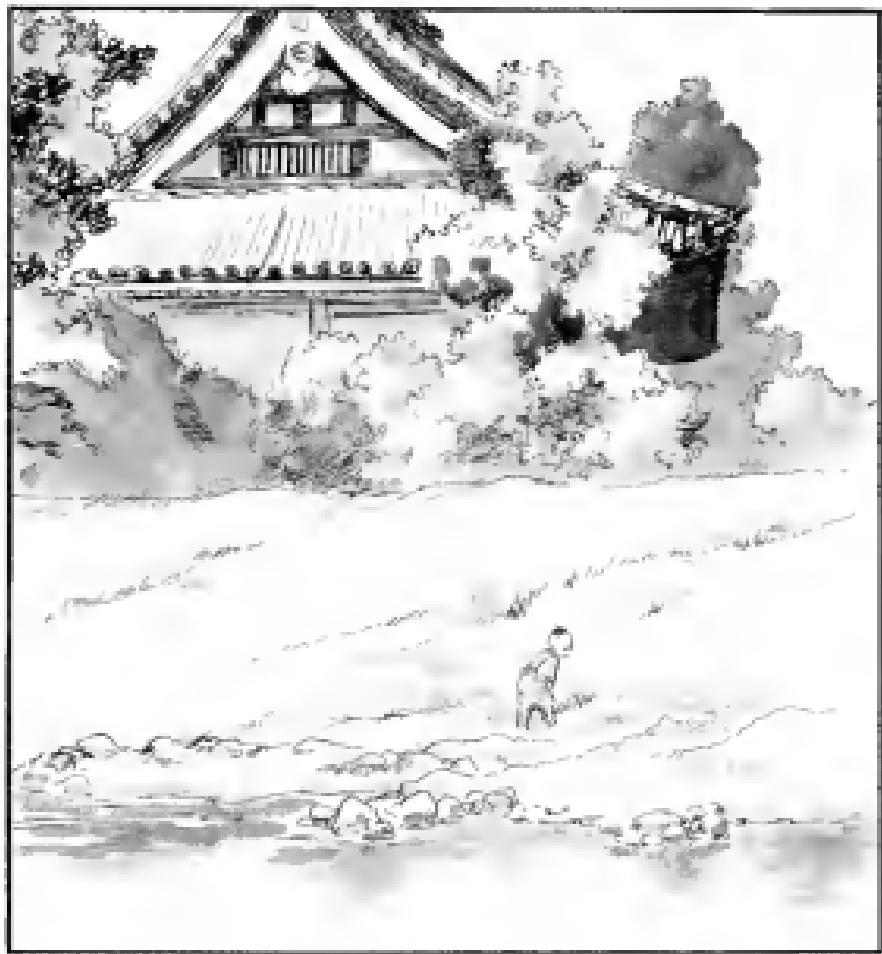
Perhaps
in
Death

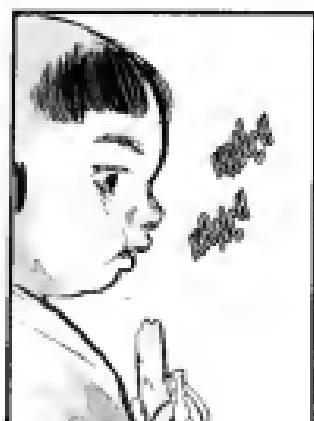
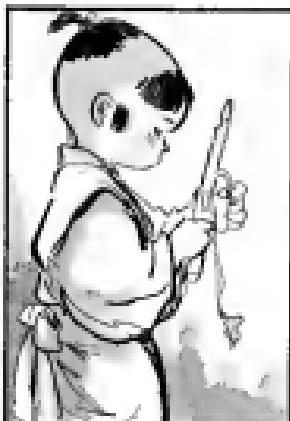
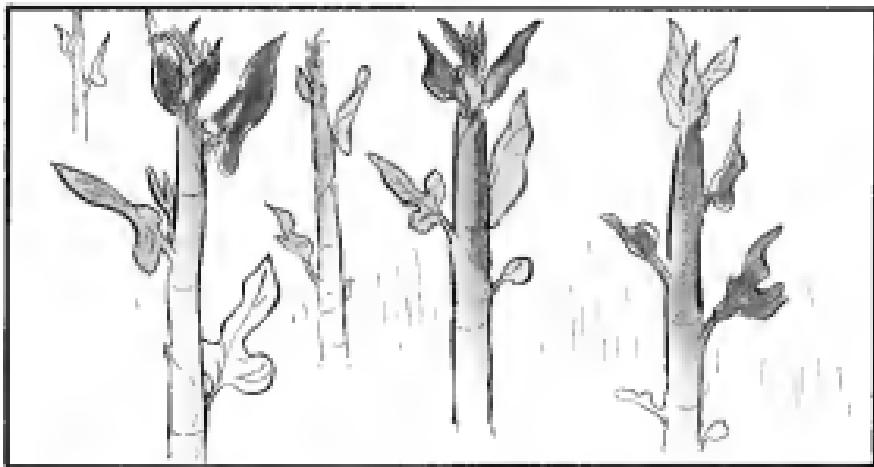




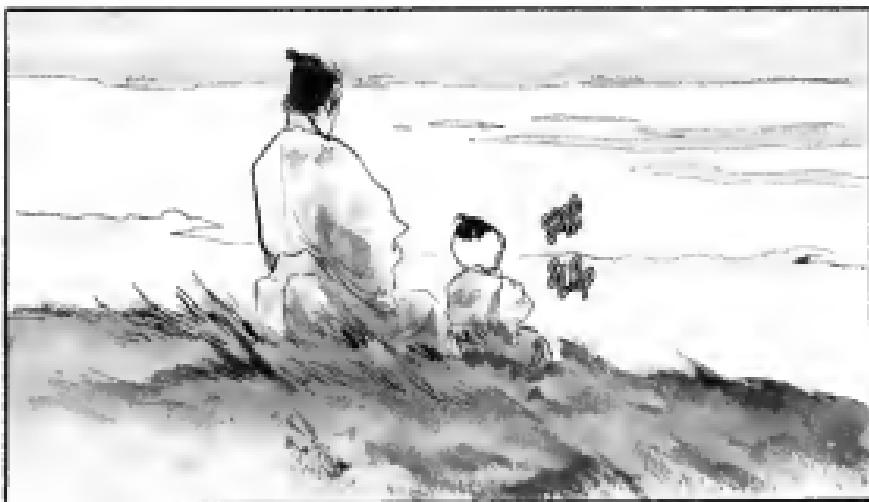




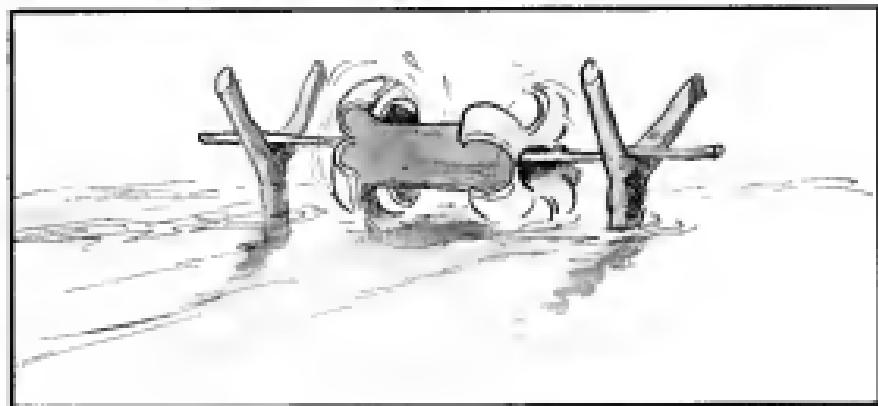
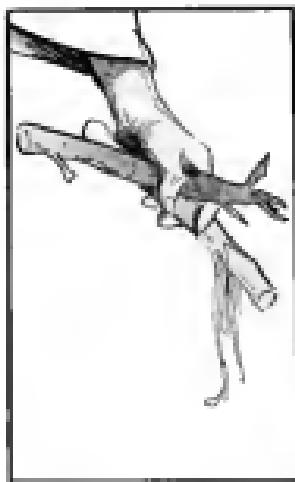


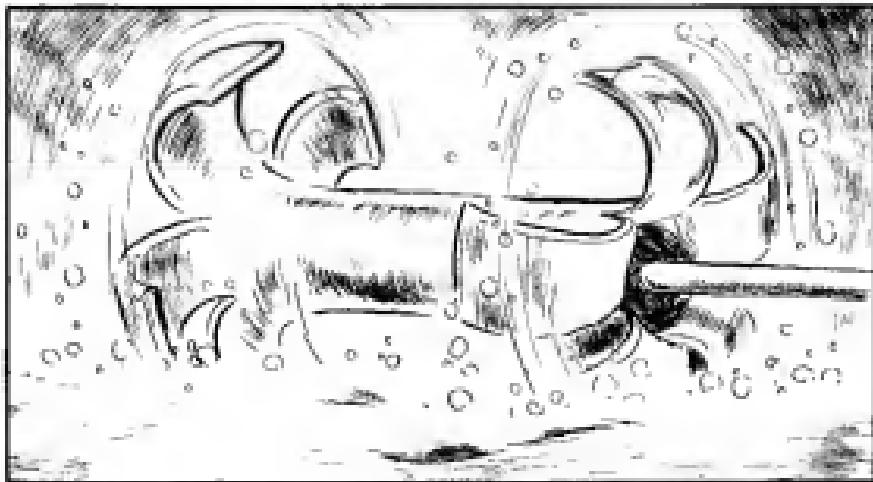
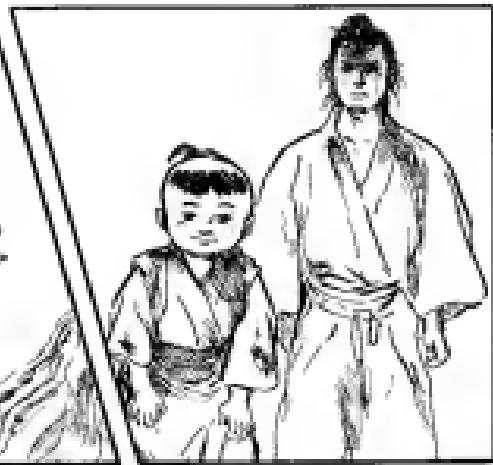
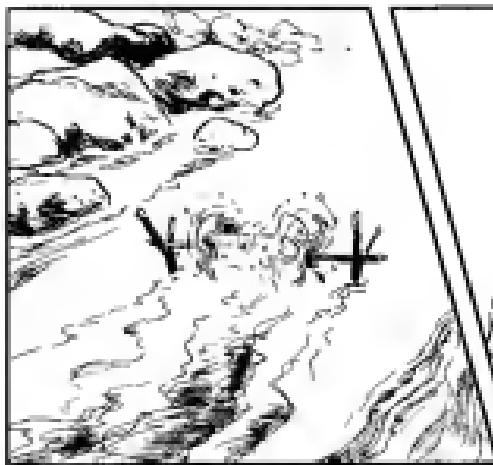


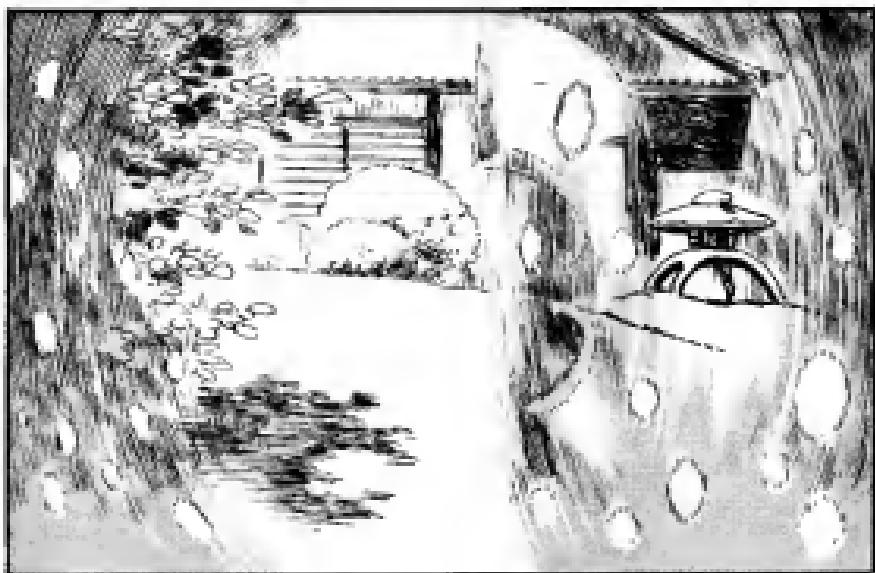
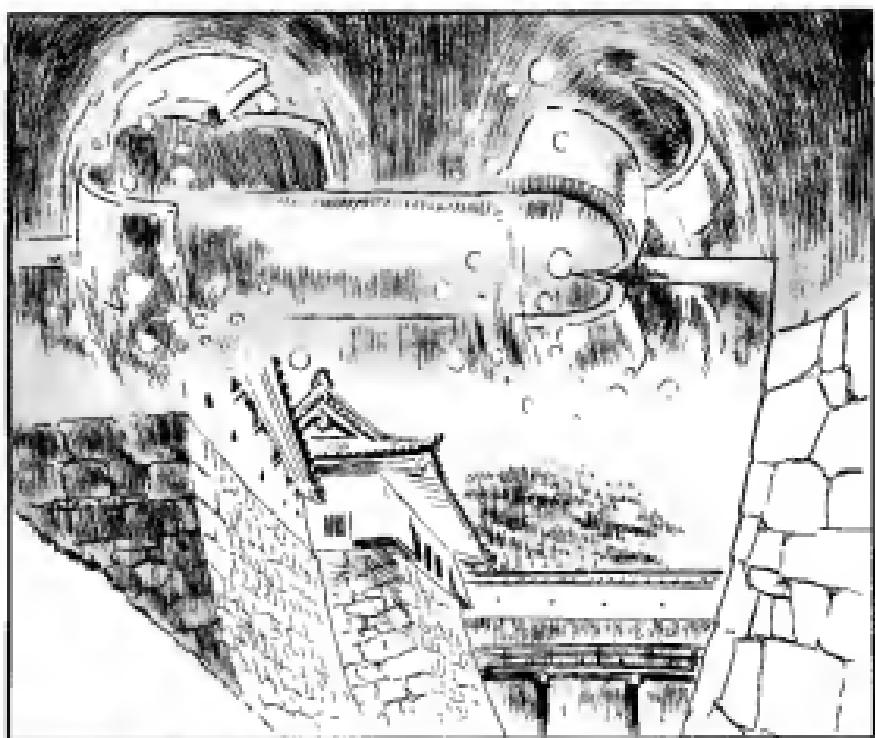




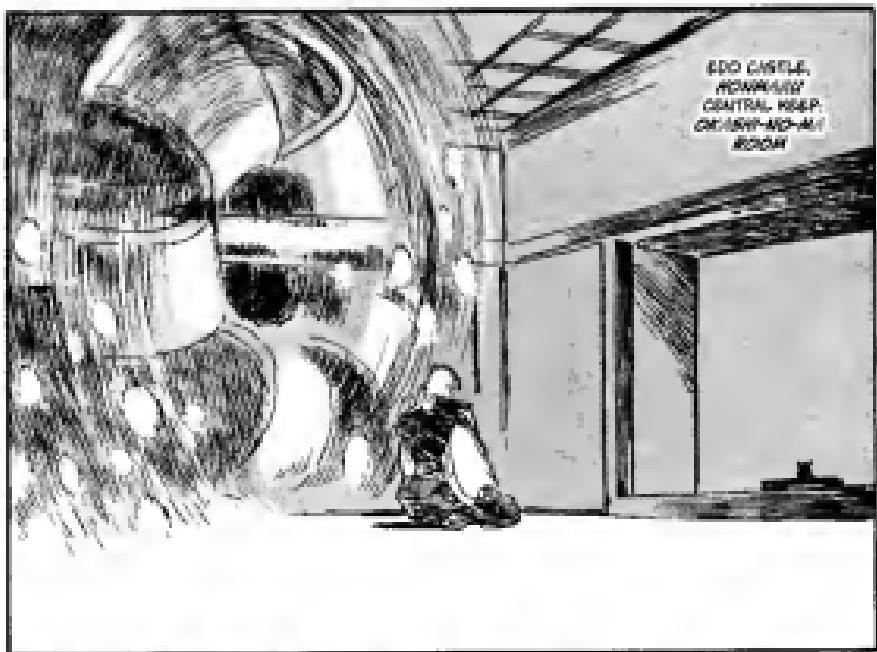








EDO CASTLE,
HONNAMI
CENTRAL REEF,
ONE-ARM-ONE-
ARM ROOM





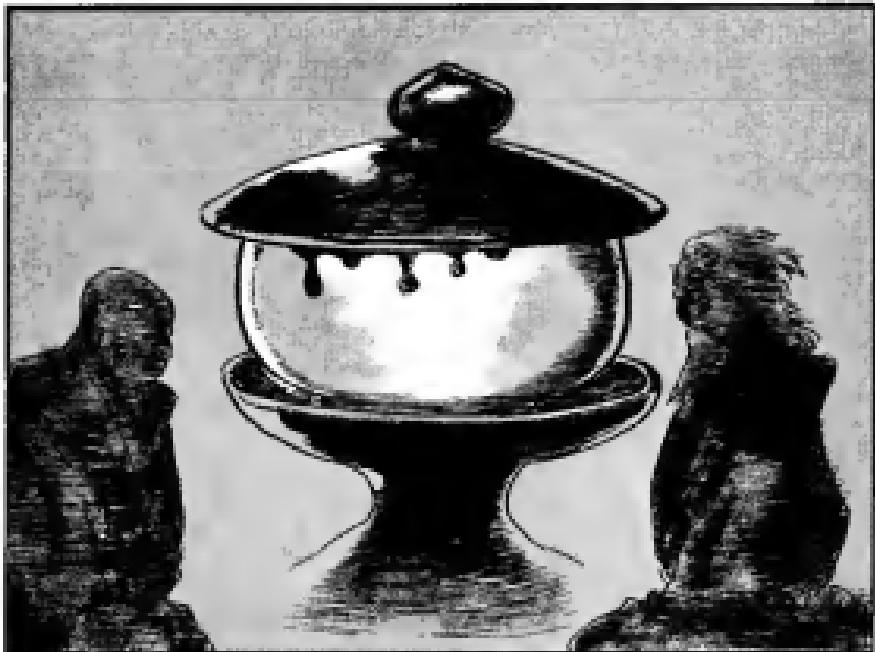


SPINNING
IN LIFE'S CURRENT...

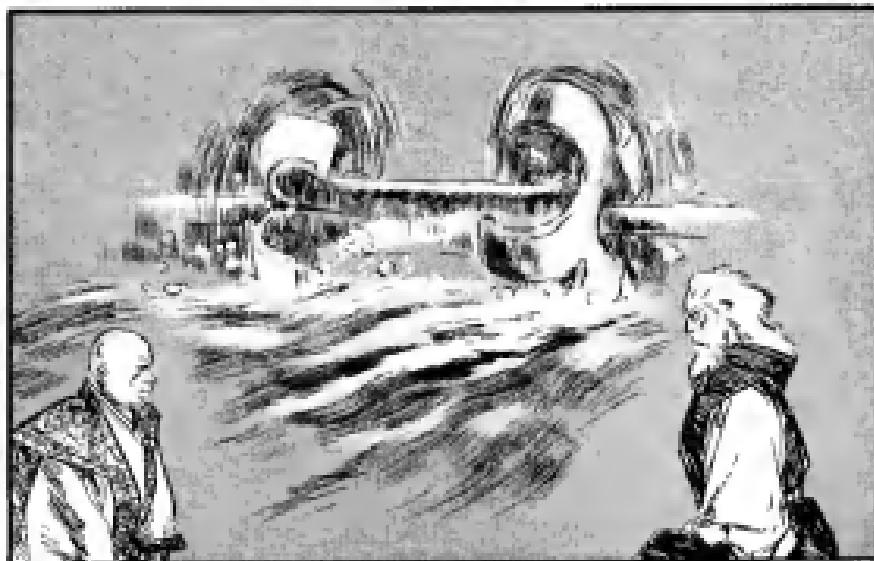
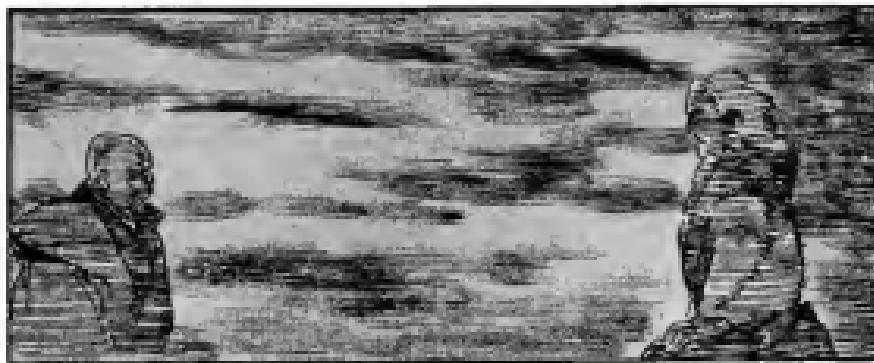
AROUND
AND
AROUND...

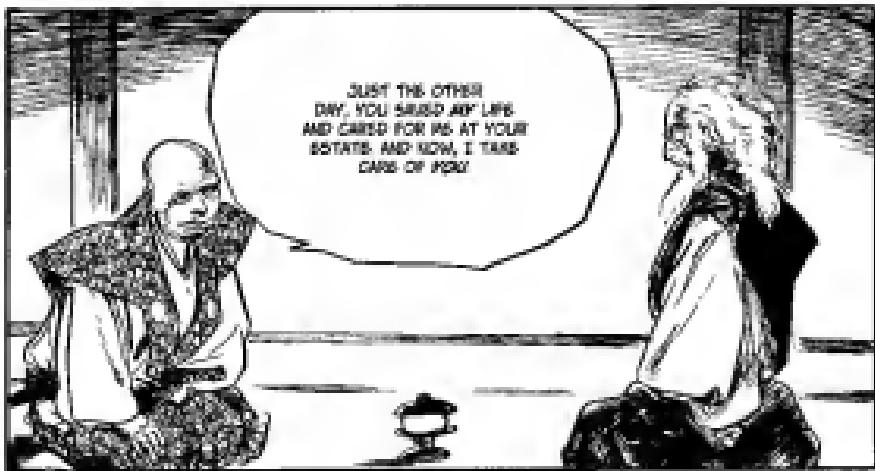
WE CAN'T
FIGHT IT. WE
SPIN UNTIL
WE DIE.

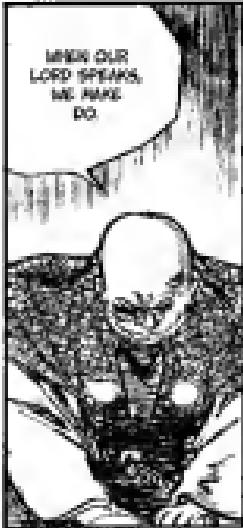
PLEASE...
HAVE SOME
TEA.
MY MUD



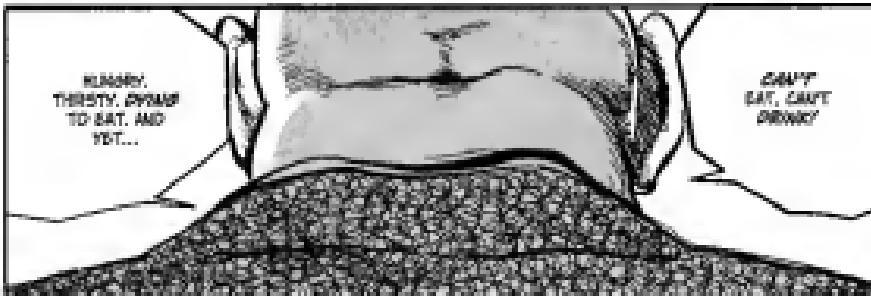
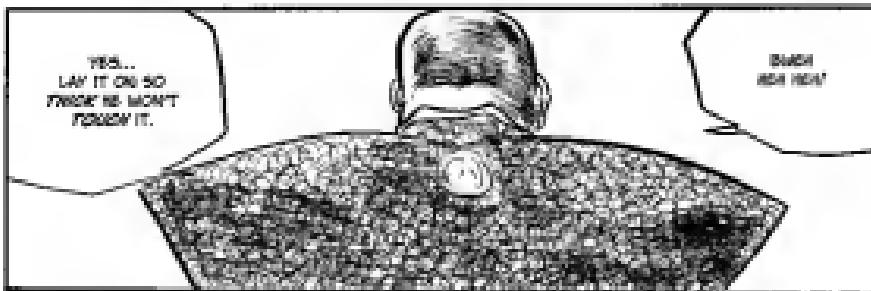
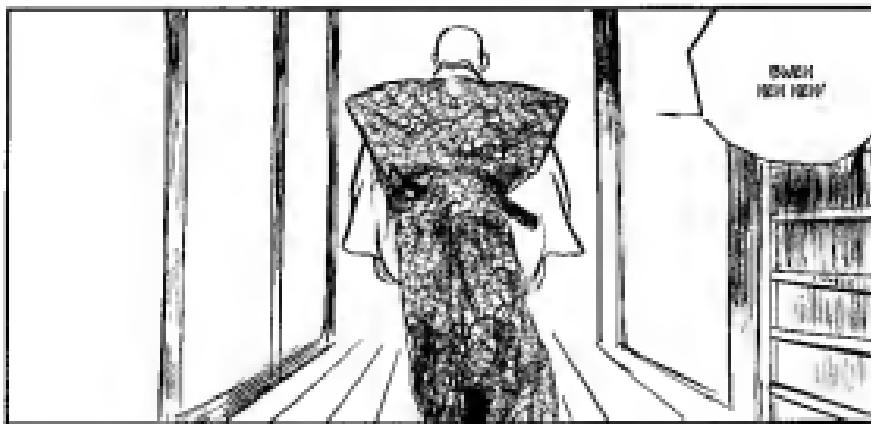














BUT IF
HE STARVED
HIMSELF TO
DEATH, I'M
CLEAN.

THEY'LL
SAY HE DIED
TO ATONE FOR
HIS SINS.

ESPECIALLY
SINCE THEY
WON'T FIND
POISON.

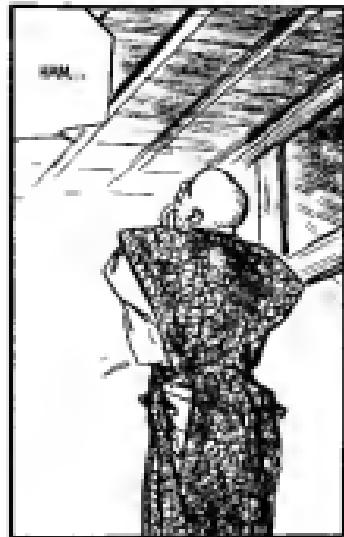
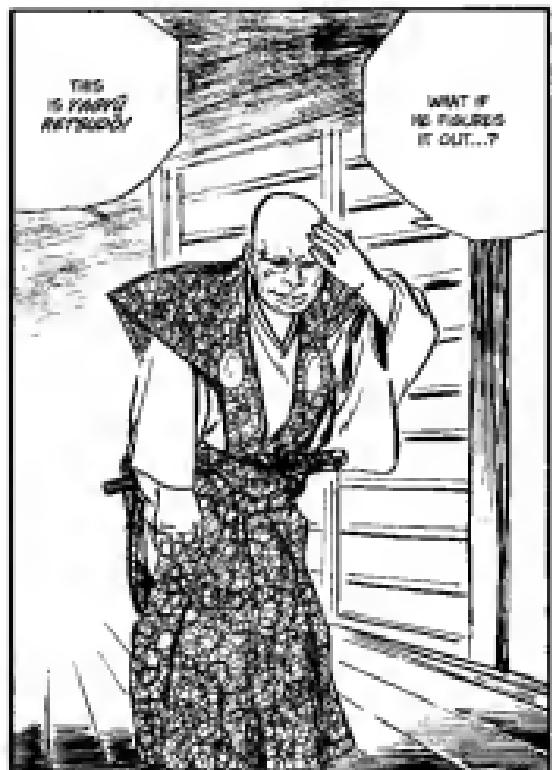
OUR LORD
ASKED FOR
DANAI.

BUT LATE,
BUTTERFLY
CLOUDS,
HEH HEH...

...I SAY
I CAN'T
FIND 'EM.

JUST SAY
THAT.

BUT
WANT?









IT'S THEIR EYES,
AND HAIR, NOSE
AND MOUTH, ARMS
AND LEGS!

IF THE YAKU
PERIOD, THE TOKUGAWA
SO BOLD, NO ADMIRE
TO HEAR THE WARRIOR
HOOVER, THE CLASH OF
BLADES AND ROAR
OF MUSKETS.

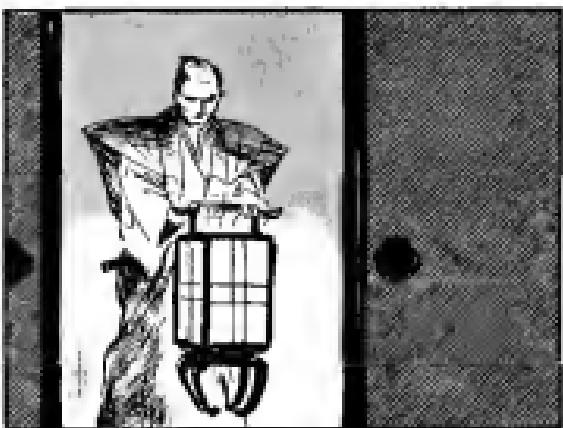


NO ADMIRE TO SMELL
OUT THE SECRETS OF
THE LAND, NO ADMIRE TO
DRINK THE BLOOD OF
DAMNED

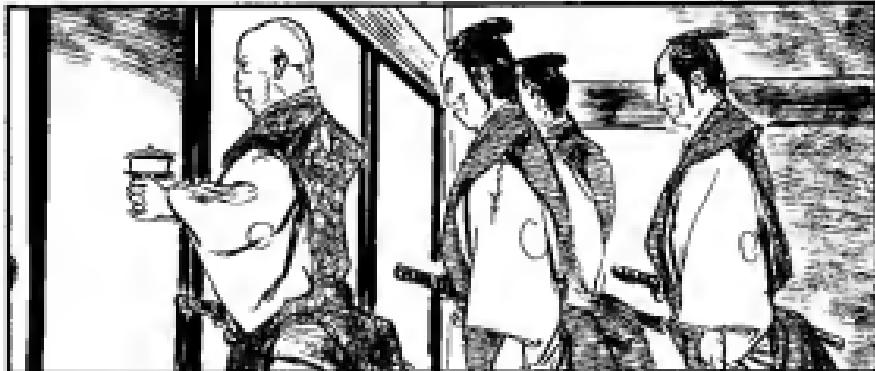
NO
YAKU—
NO
TOKUGAWA!

I'LL SUMMON
THE GRASS, KILL
IT TO, AND REBUILD
THE GIANT

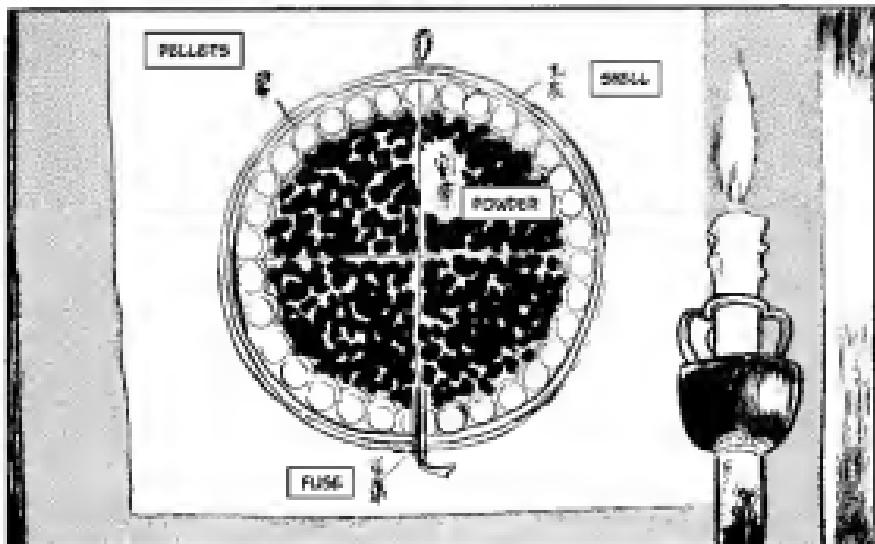


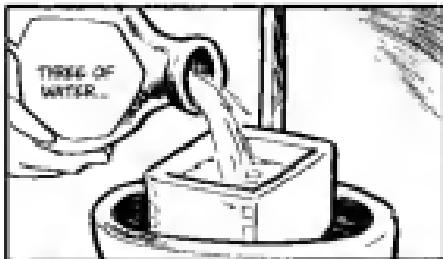






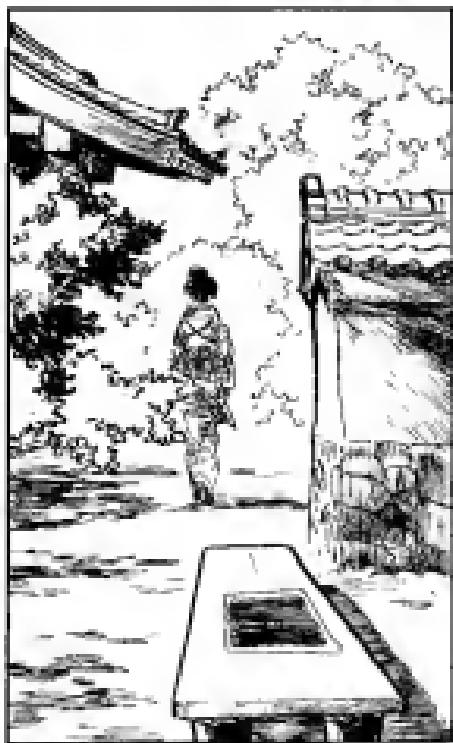
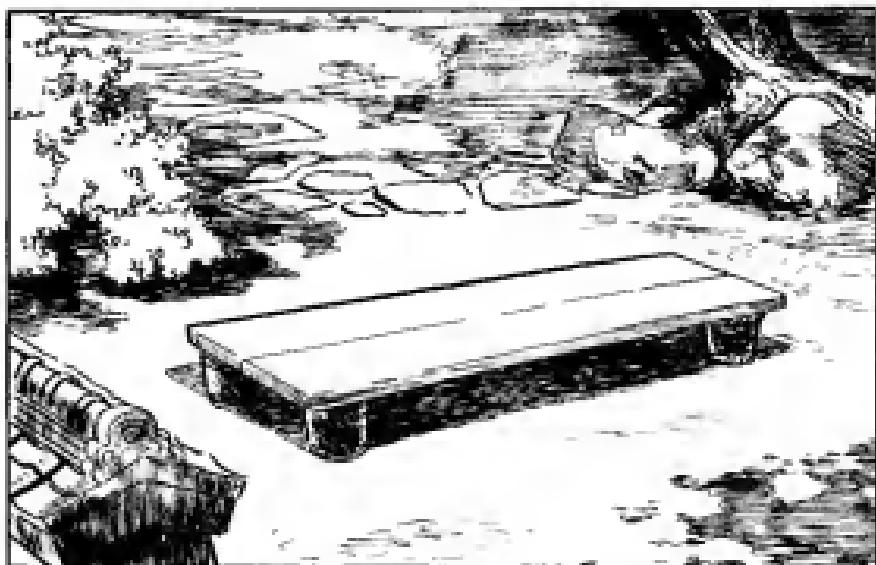


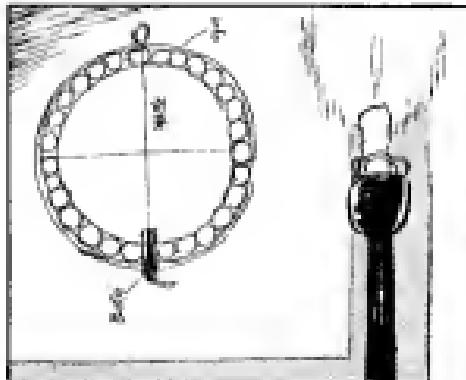
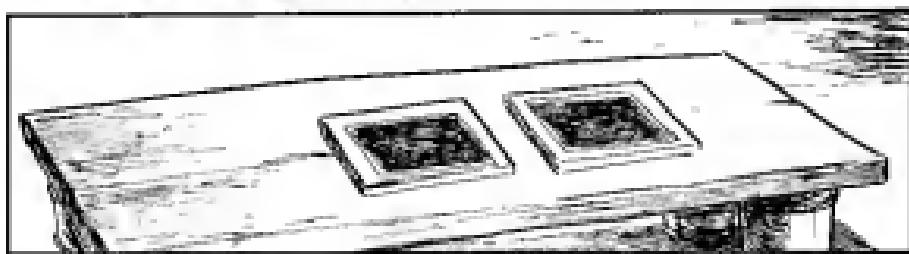


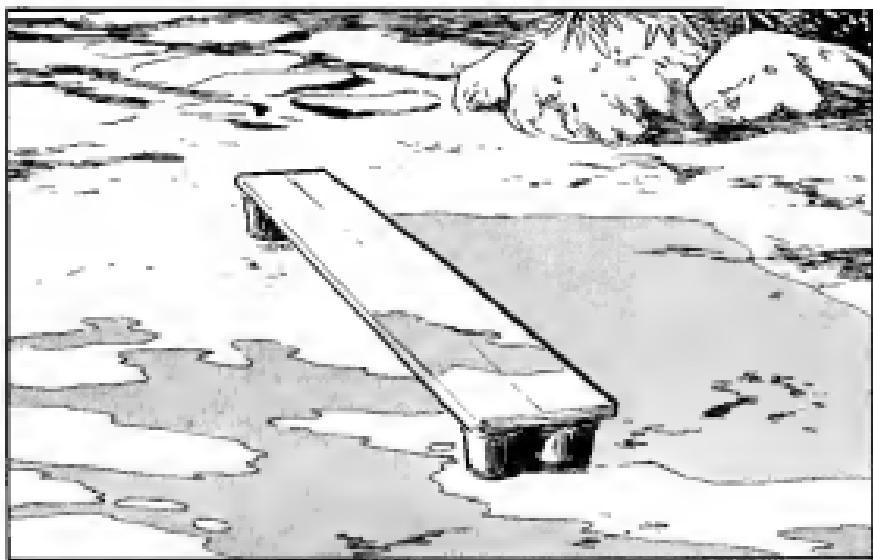
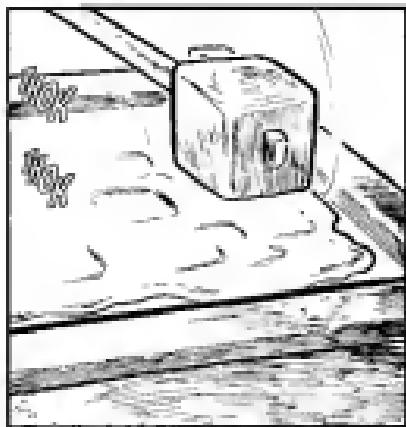
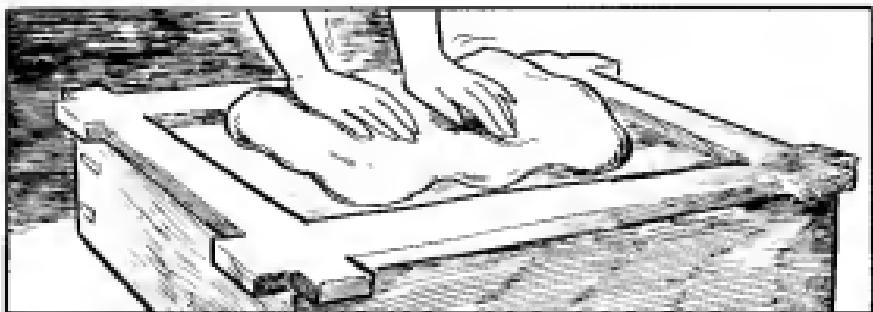


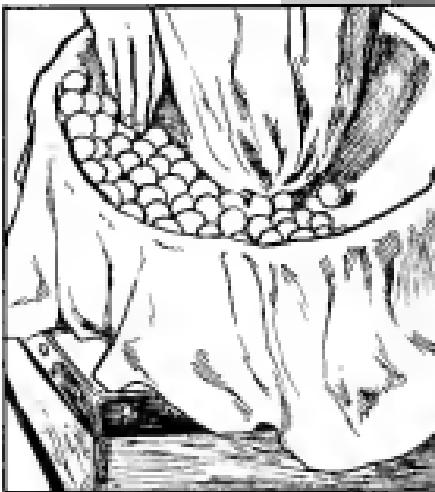


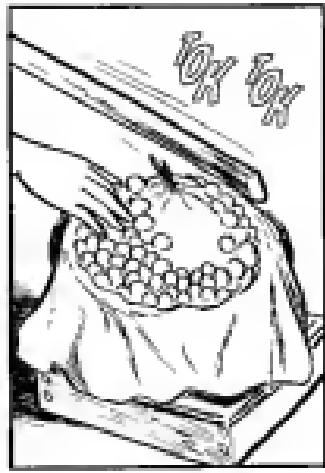
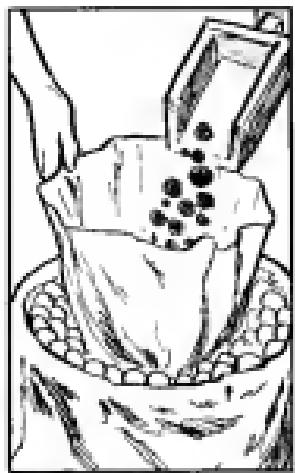




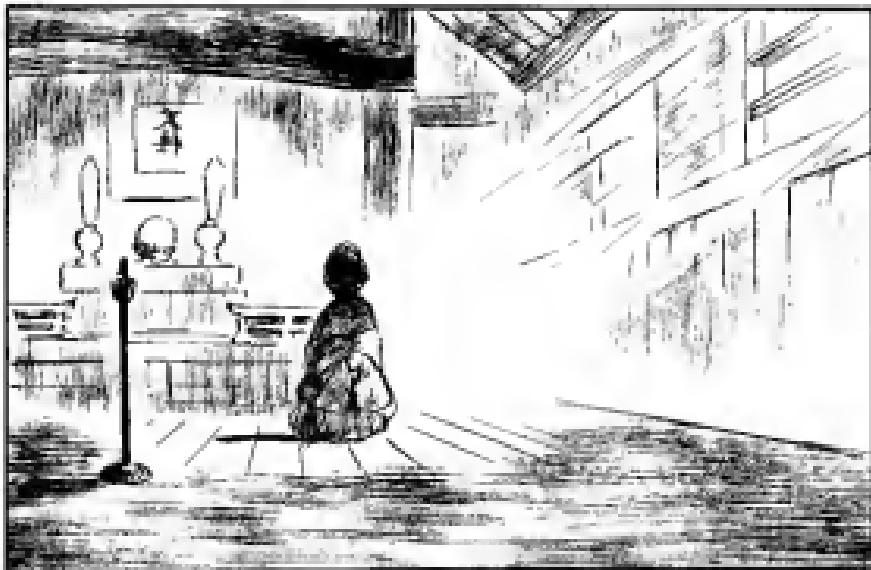




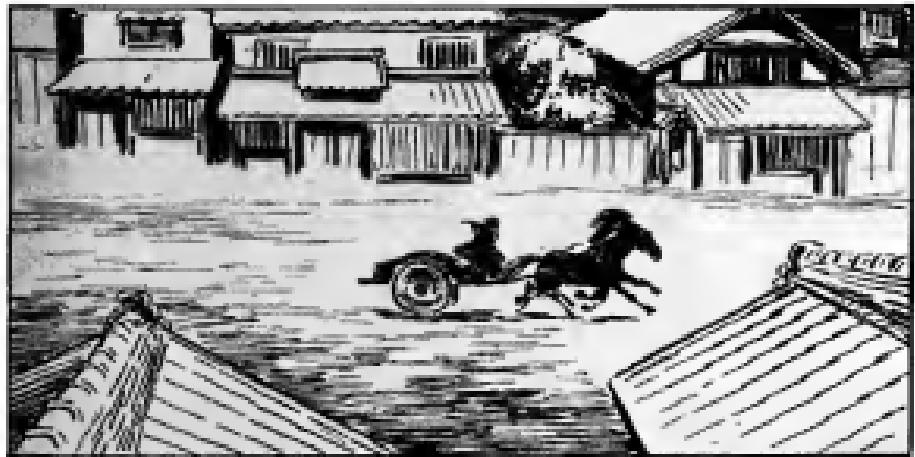








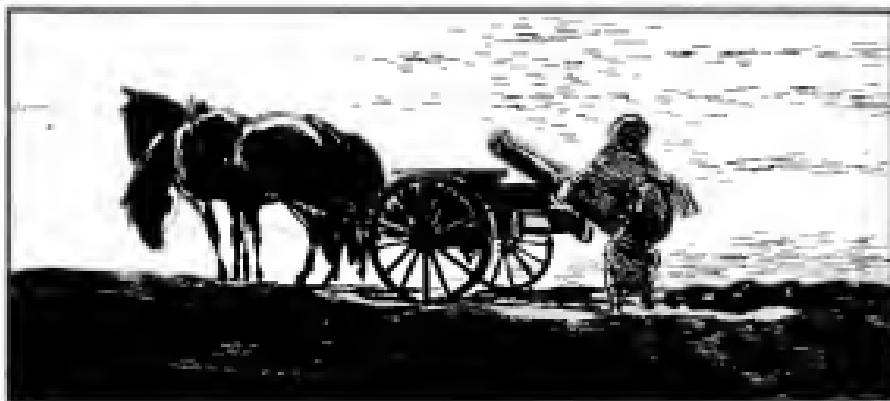


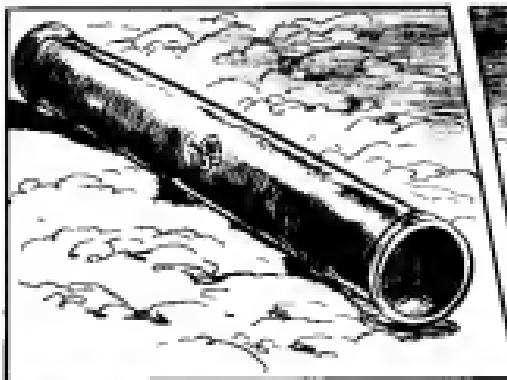


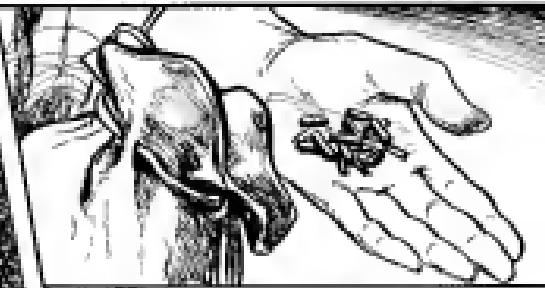










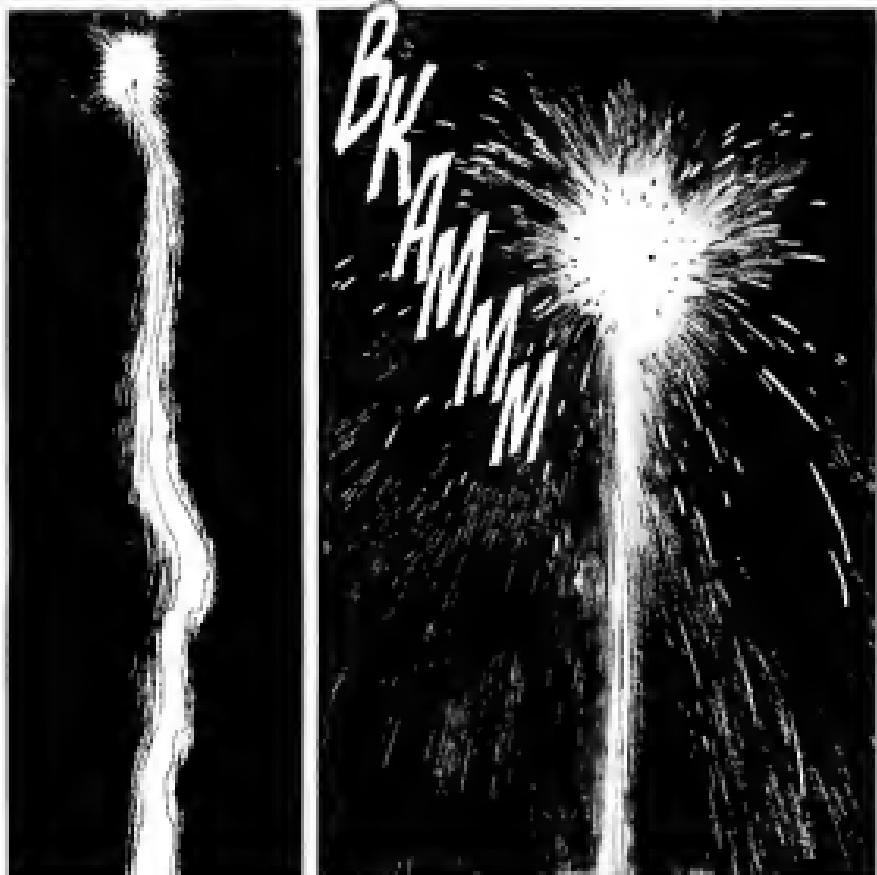




SHOOM

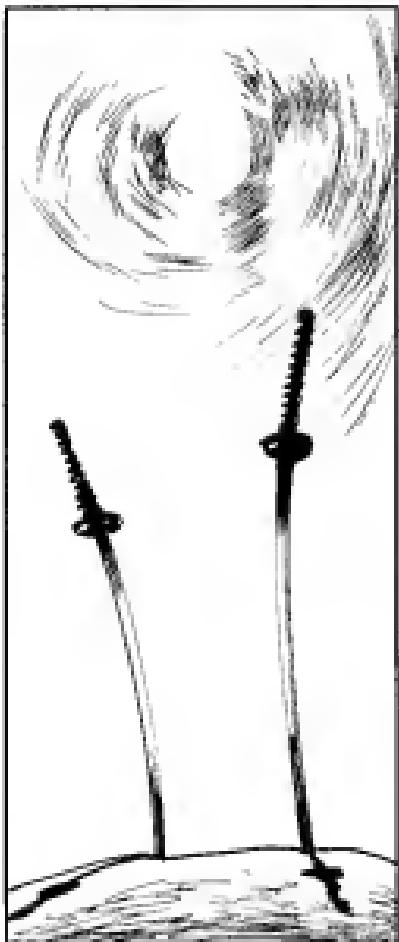


BAM















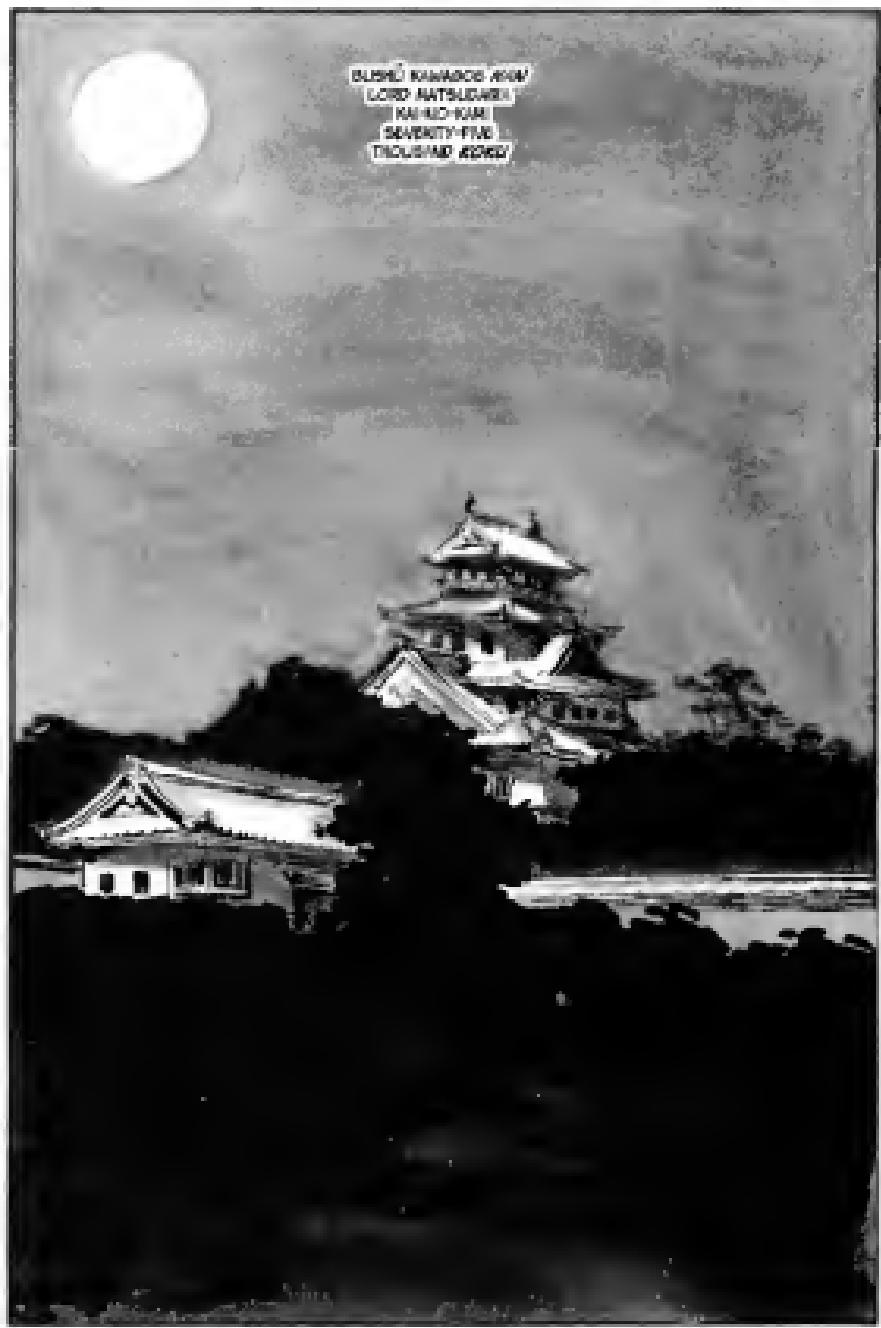


the hundred and
twenty-third

Tales
of the
Grass:
Oyamada
Shume



BISHU KAWASAKI ANNA
LORD MATSUOKA
KANNO KAMI
SEVENTY-FIVE
THOUSAND KOKU

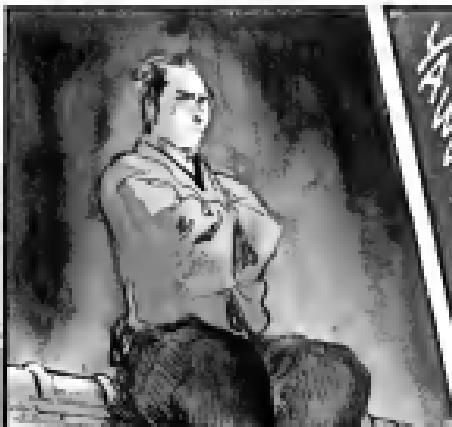


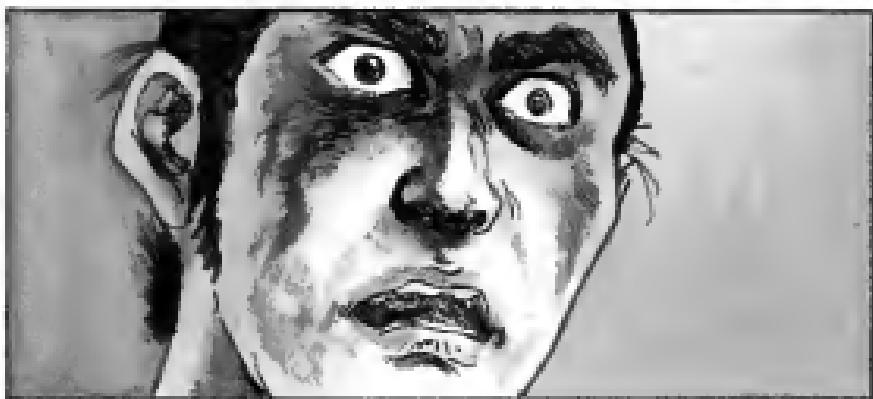
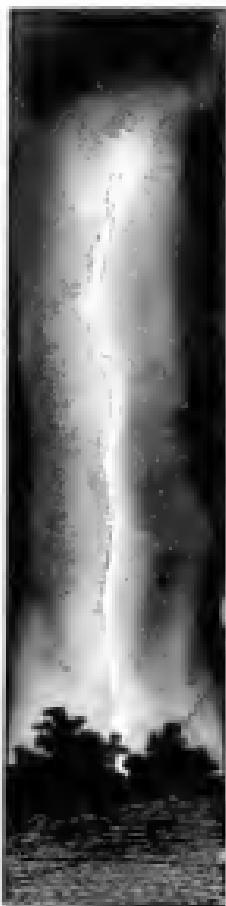
KAWARAE ARMY SPRAWLED
OVER THE KURASHIRO
PLAIN IN THE CENTER OF
KUSASHI THIRTY-EIGHT BY
NORTHWEST OF EDO.



IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN TENSHO SANSHIEN (1591),
DURING THE GREAT APPROPRIATION OF PEAS FOLLOWING
TOYOTOMI'S DEFEAT. IT HAD 10,000 STANDING MEN
THREE THOUSAND ARMED, BUT IN THE 1640'S, CLOSELY TO
THE EDO FORUM, GENERATIONS OF ITS RULERS CAME TO
HOLD CRITICAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY POSTS IN THE
BUREAUCRACY. THEY WERE AMONG THE CLOSEST OF THE
TOKUGAWA DAIMYOJI, AND WERE REWARDED
ACCORDINGLY...







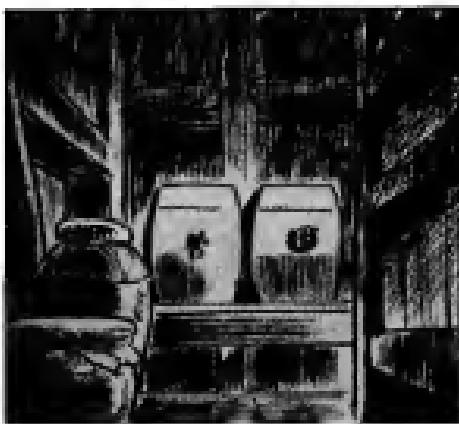


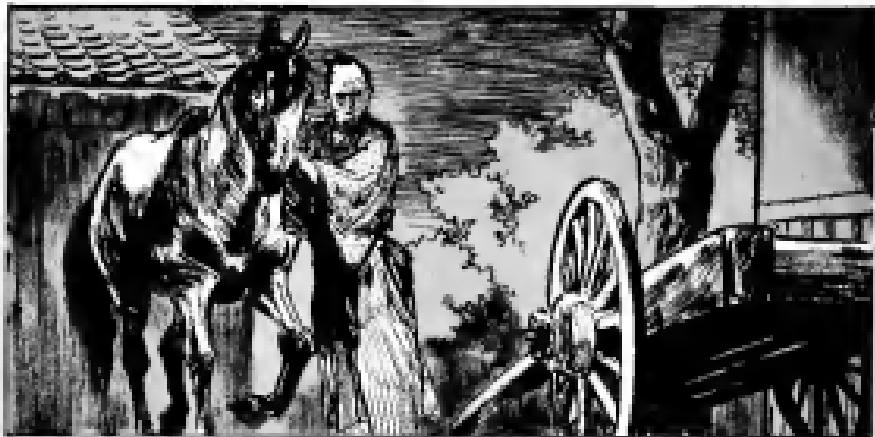
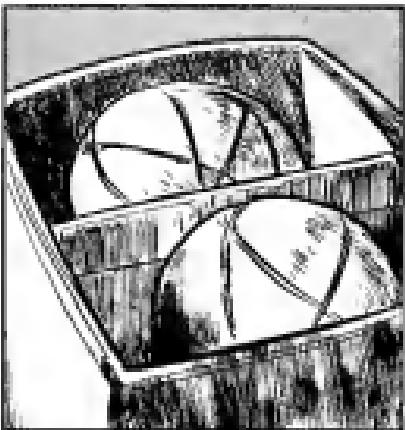
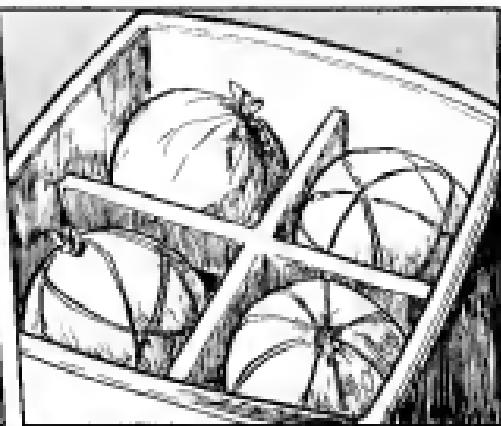


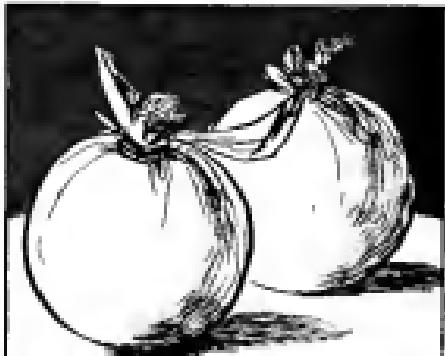






















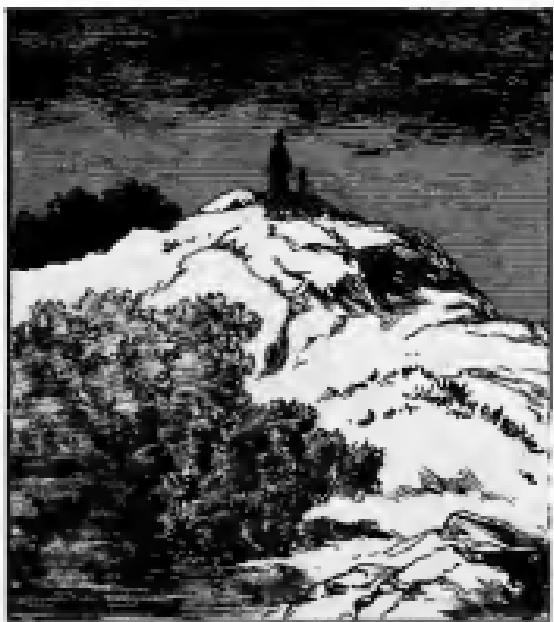












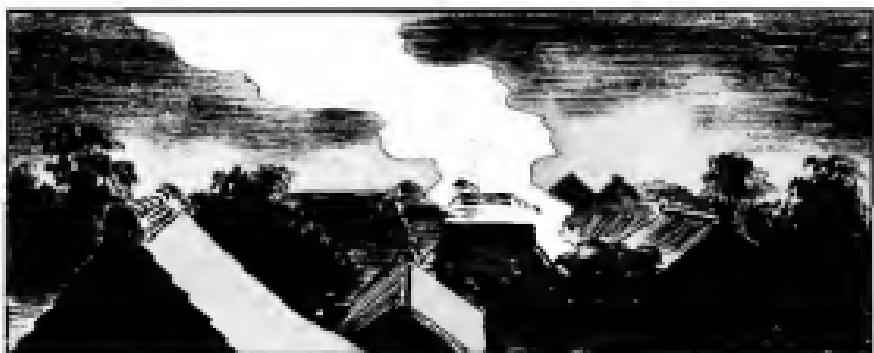


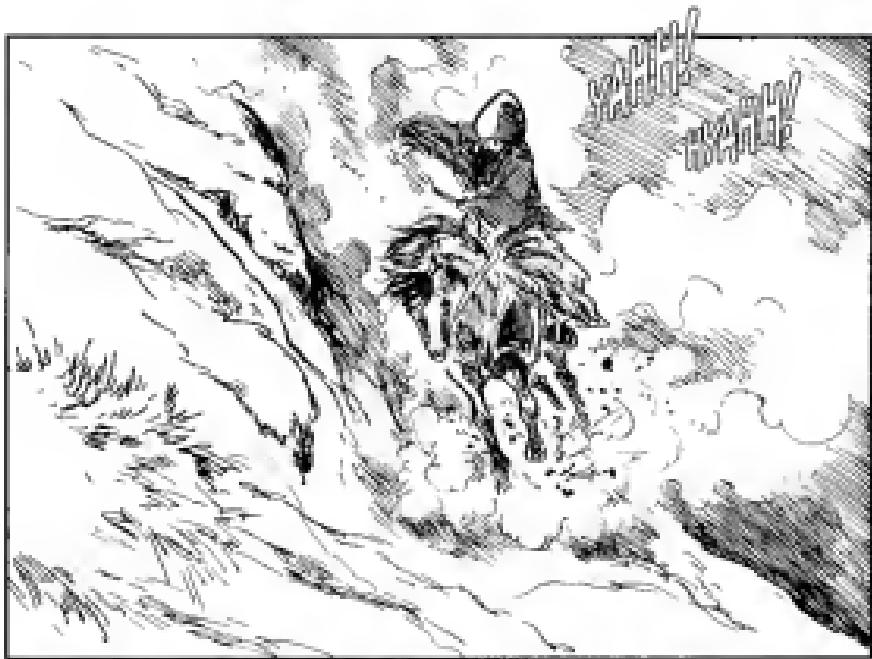
SHREK





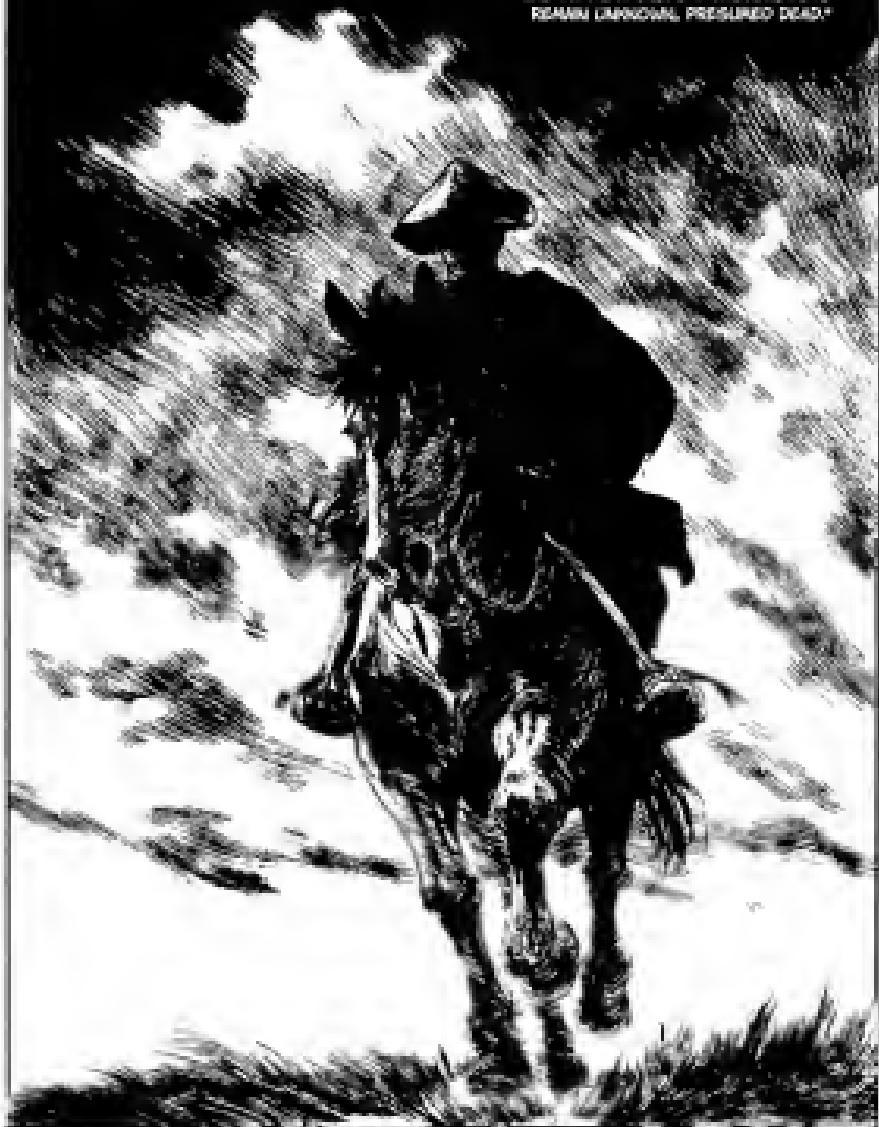






FROM THE REPORT
OF THE AMBASSADOR
OF KANASOS AND...

"A SUSPICIOUS FIRE IN FUKASAWA
TODAY DESTROYED THE OFFICIAL
RESIDENCE OF ARMY CAVALRY
OFFICER CYANADA SHUNKE. TWO
BODIES RECOVERED FROM THE
FLAMES ARE BELIEVED TO BE THOSE
OF CYANADA'S MATURED FATHER
AND MOTHER. SHUNKE'S WHEREABOUTS
REMAIN UNKNOWN. PRESUMED DEAD."





the hundred and
twenty-fourth

Tales
of the
Grass:
Nakodeza
Bushō





THE JEWELRY ERA
MARSHAL SADMI
YOSHIMARU LOOKING
DOWN UPON THE OCEAN
FROM HIS CASTLE
MOUNT IN TATEYAMA
WAS MOVED TO
16156-

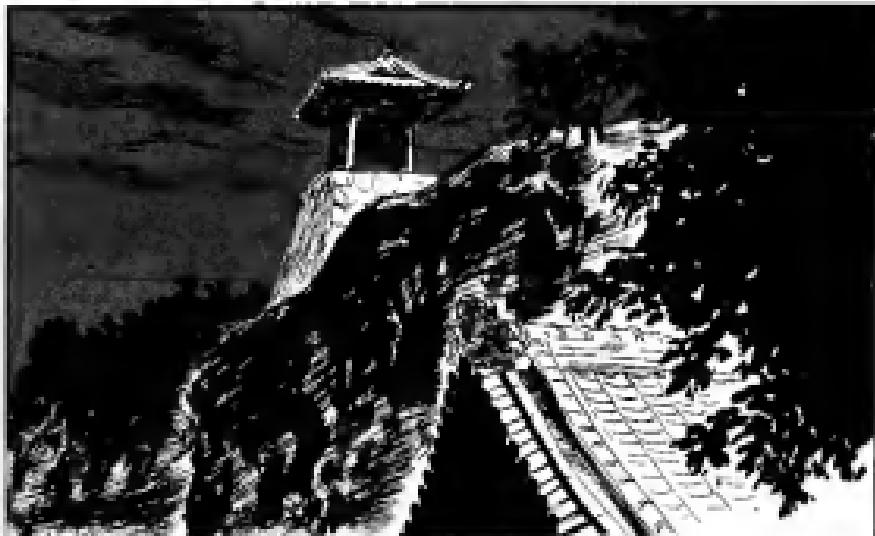
HOW GENTLE
THE WAVES
ON THIS
ANCHOR SEA

TATEYAMA
KAGAMI-OMURA
(ANCHOR BAY)



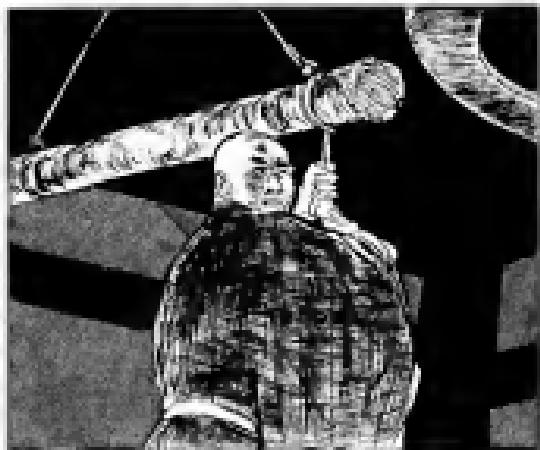


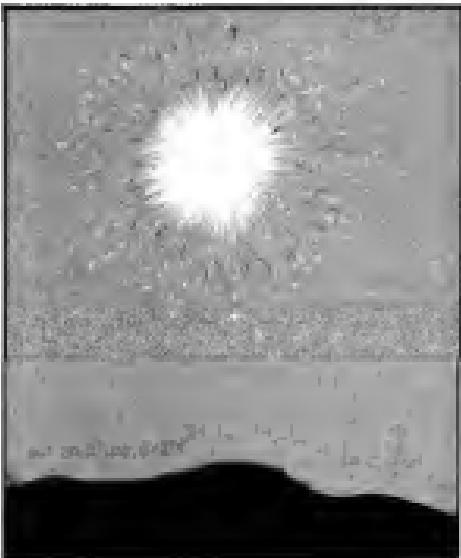
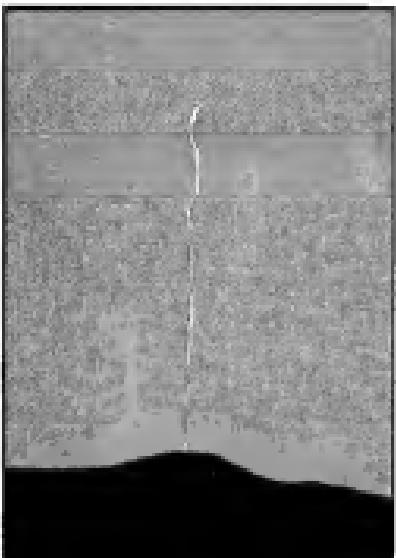
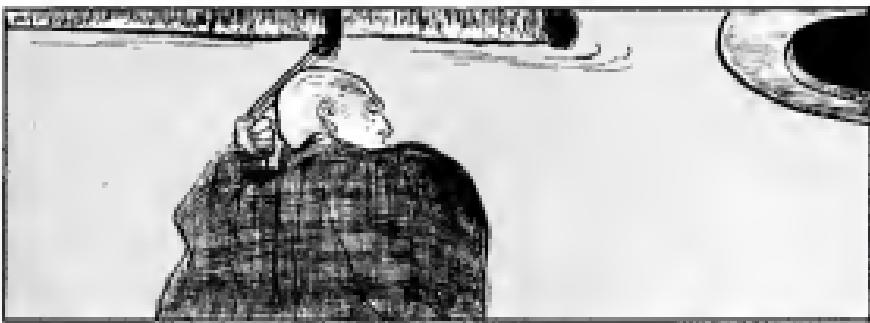
HAKO-MI-KAMON,
ONI-DOFUKU-ROKKEI
AND THE GUARD
OF THE GUARD
HAKO-EN, TEMPLE

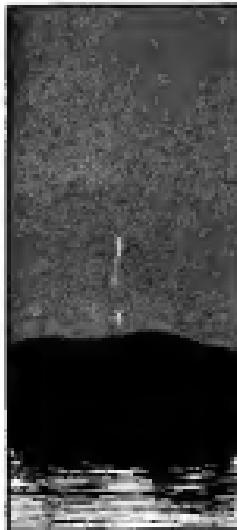


GOH AND HODEN
(TWO AM.)

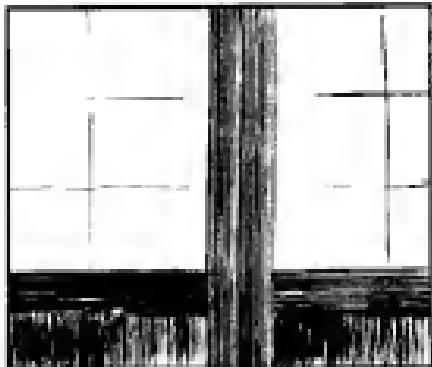


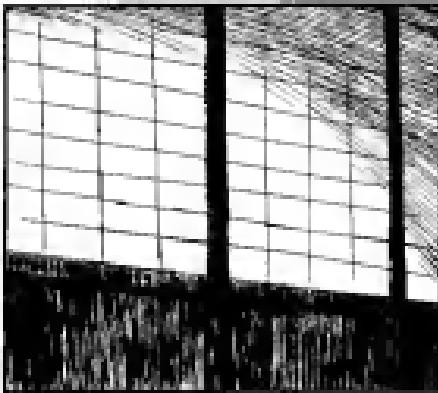








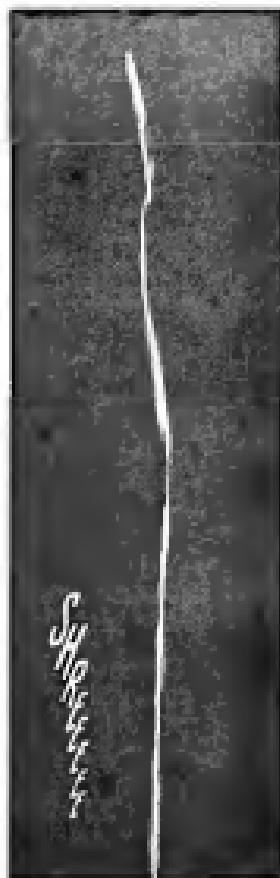
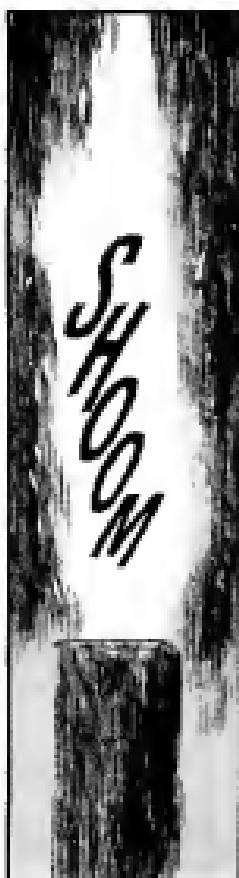
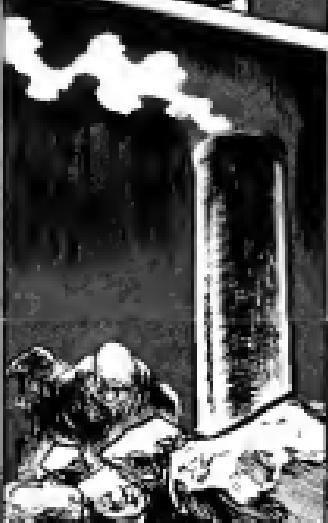
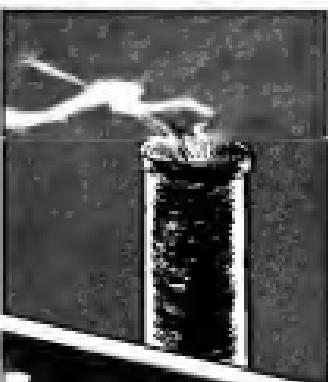


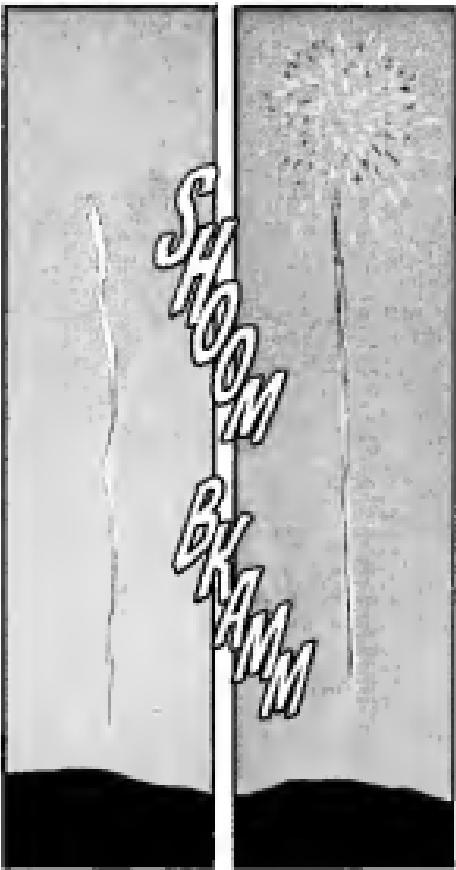
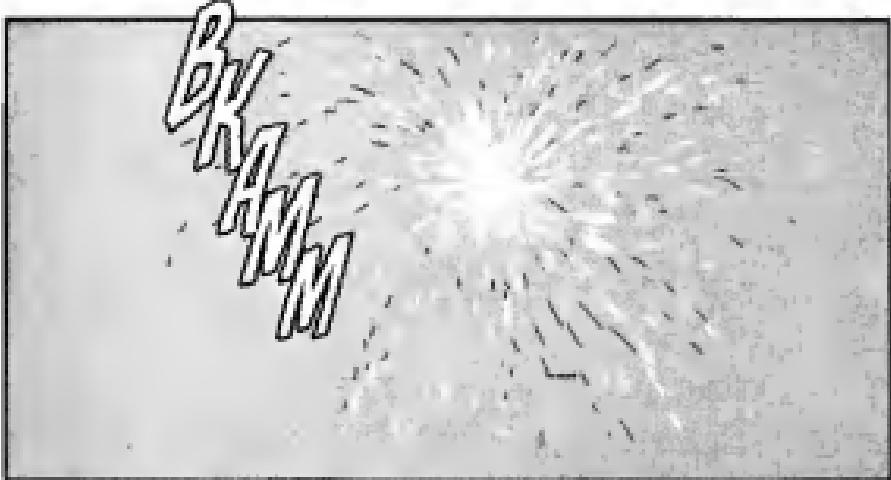


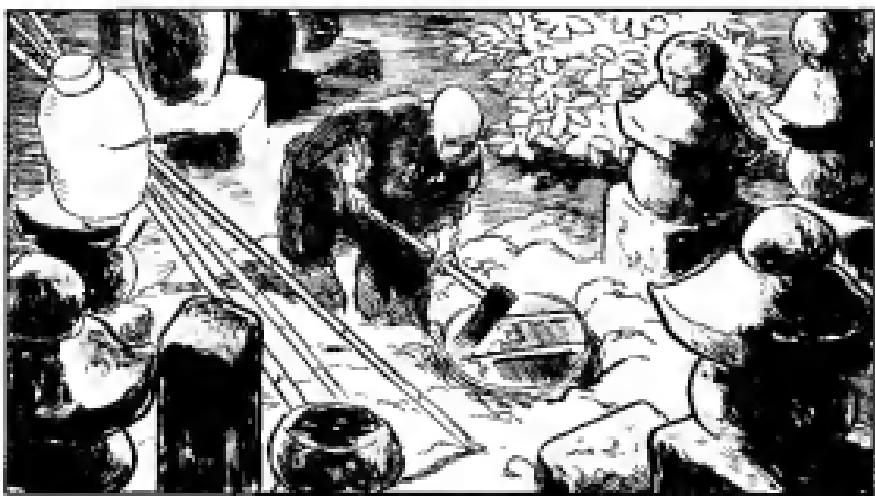


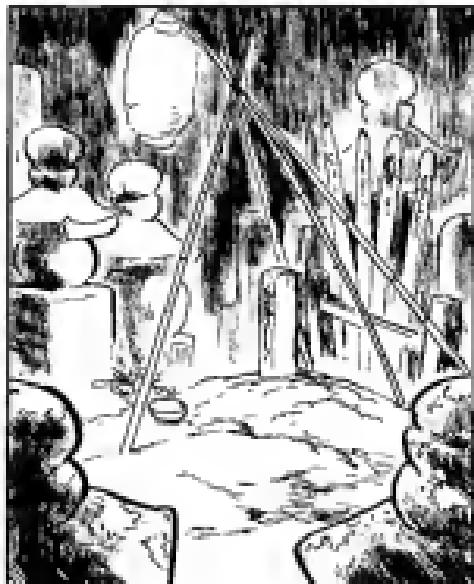


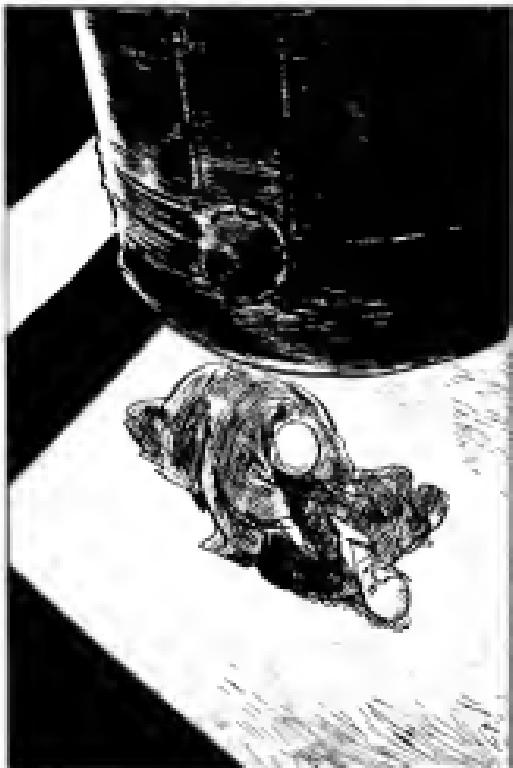






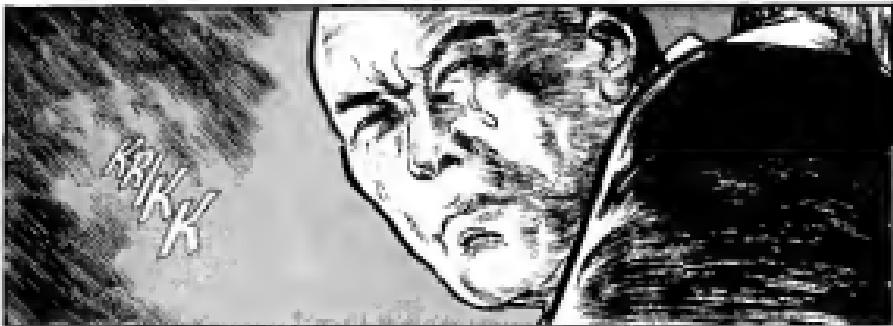
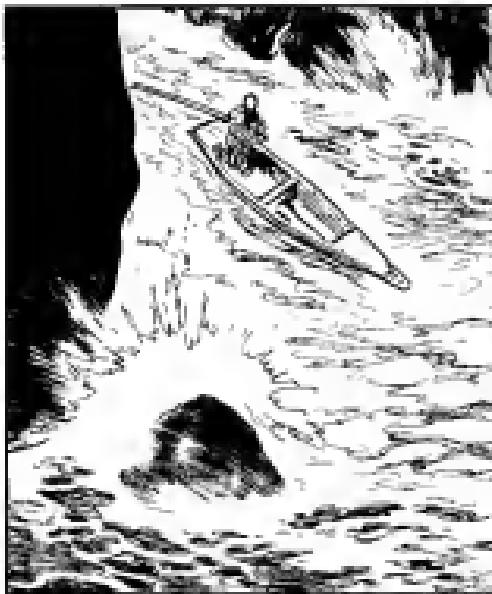


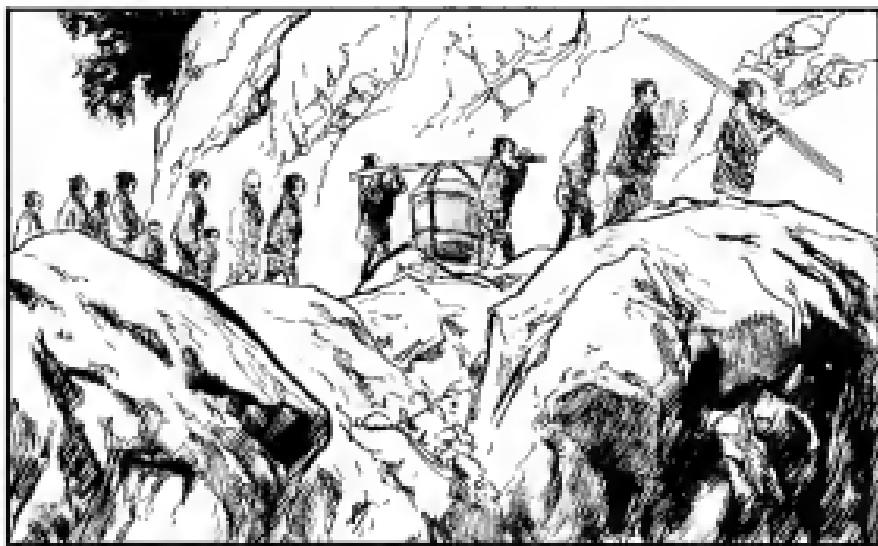














"BUSHÙ OF NAKODERA, A PRIEST OF RARE PIETY, PERISHED MOST STRANGELY MYSTERIOUSLY CRUSHED BEYOND RECOGNITION BY HIS OWN TEMPLE BELL."

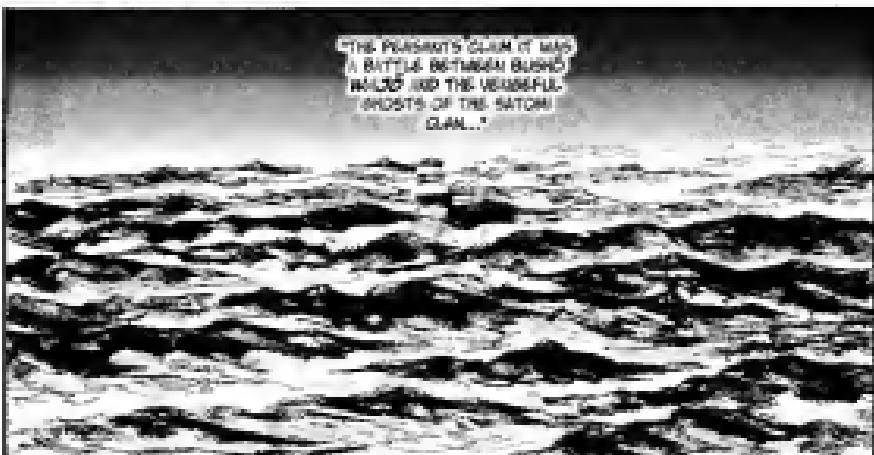
TATEKAWA ASAKA JOURNAL
BUSHÙ REPORT



"ADDITION AT OR NEAR THE SAME TIME AS THE ACCIDENT, THE TOMB OF THE SATOMI CLAN CRUMPLED TO PIECES, A GREAT MYSTERY."



"THE PURSUANT'S CLAIM IT WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN BUSHÙ WAKOZ AND THE VENGEFUL GHOSTS OF THE SATOMI CLAN..."

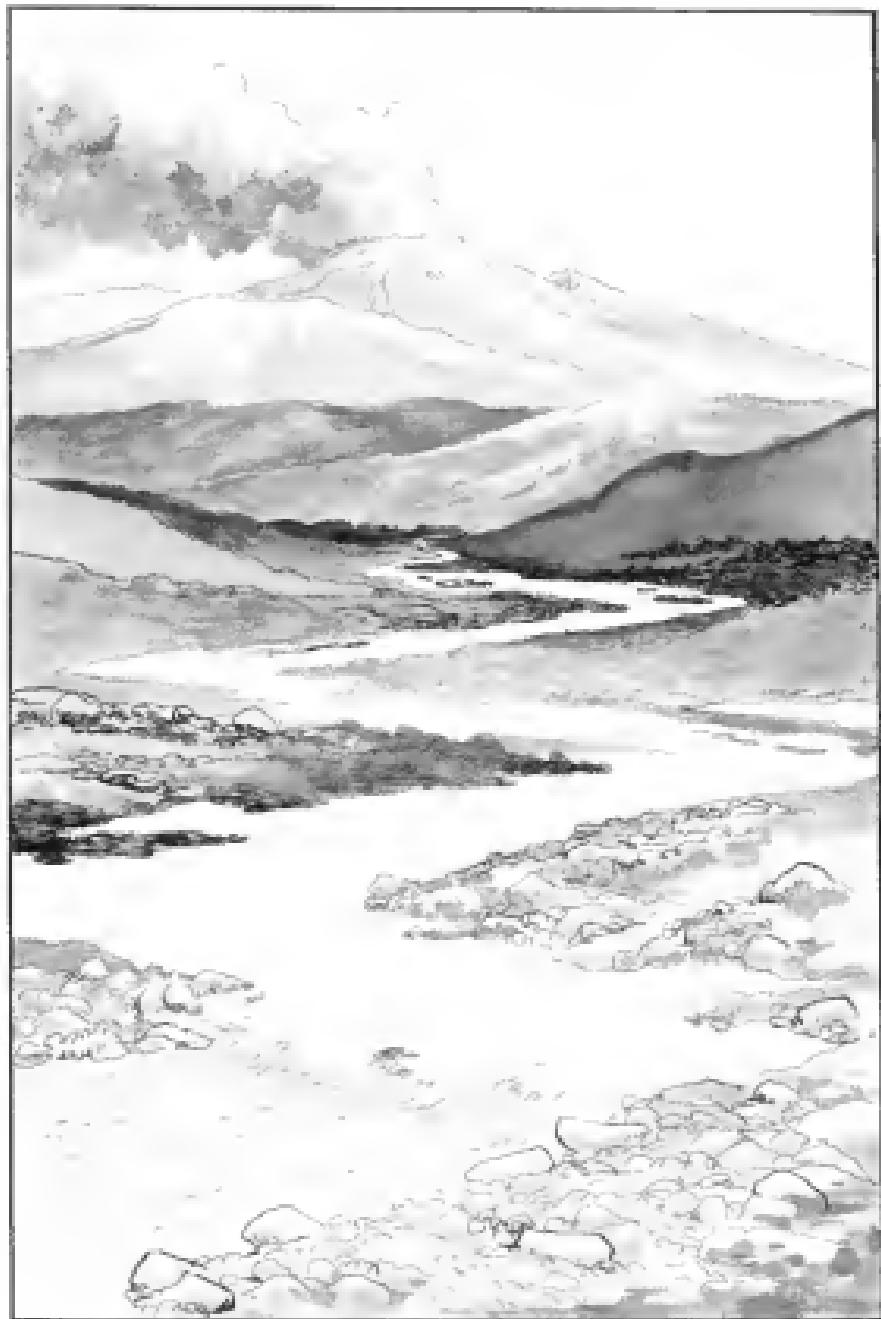




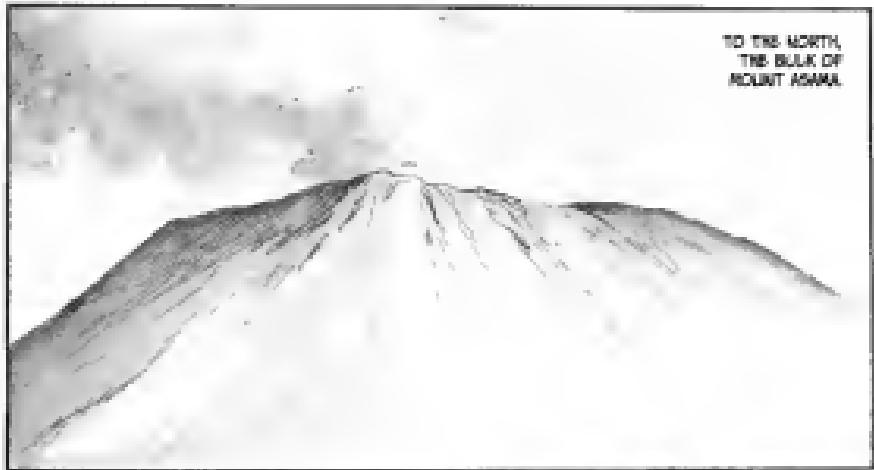
the hundred and
twenty-fifth

Tales
of the
Grass:
Day Like
Any
Other





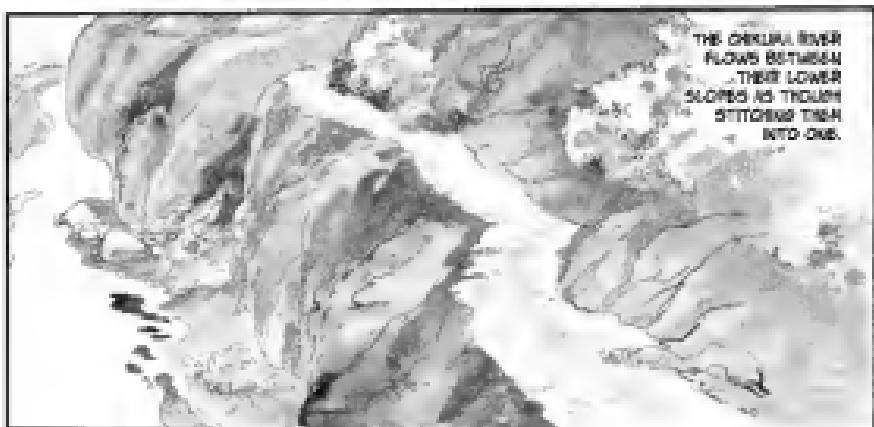
TO THE NORTH,
THE BULK OF
MOUNT ASAMA.

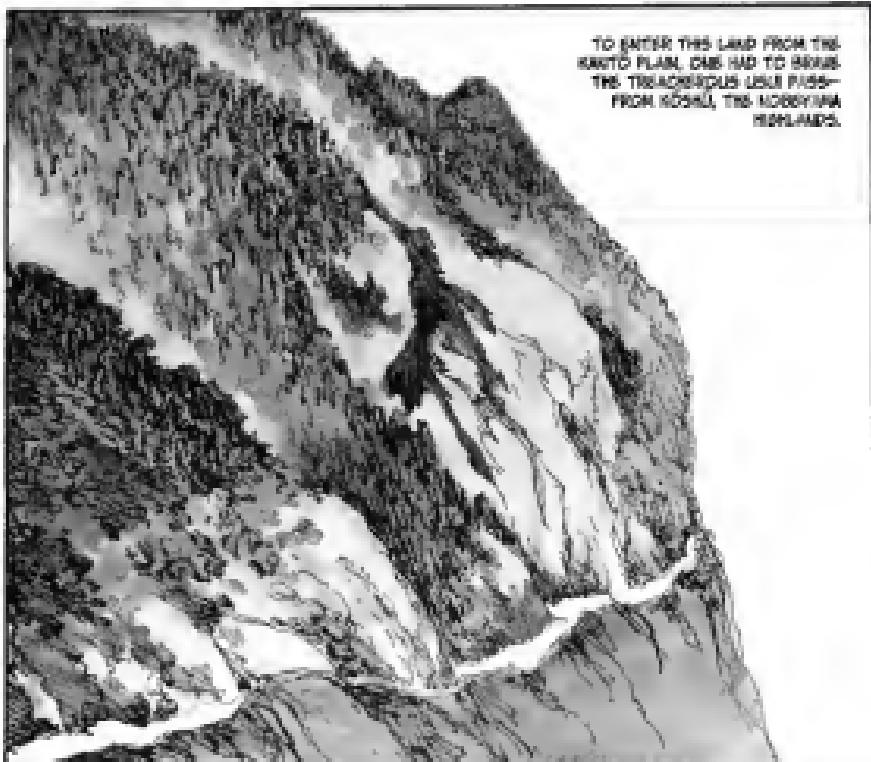


TO THE SOUTH,
THE PEAKS OF
DATEGAWA AND
MATSUGATAKE

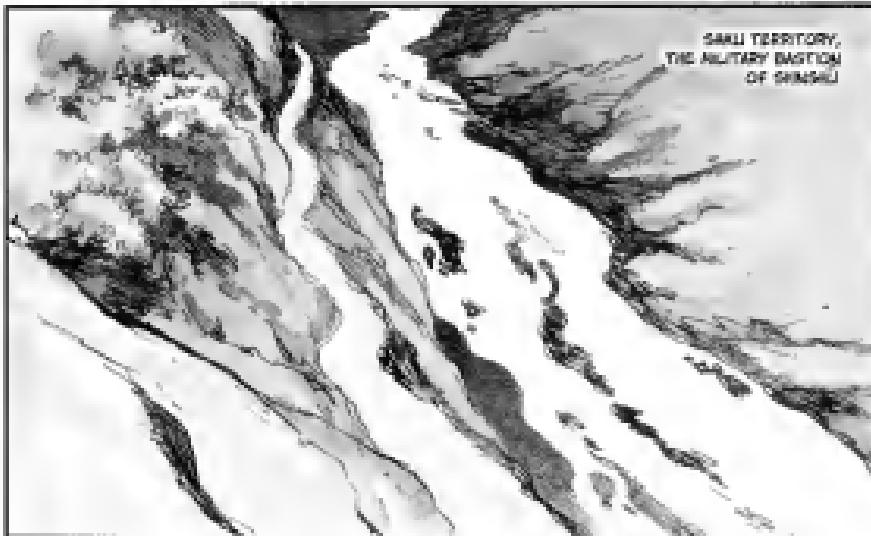


THE OKURAJA RIVER
FLOWS BETWEEN
THESE LOWER
SLOPES AS TROUGH
CUTTING THEM
INTO ONE.





TO ENTER THIS LAND FROM THE
KANTO PLAIN, ONE HAD TO BRIDGE
THE TREACHEROUS UZU PASS
FROM ISORU, THE NORTHERN
HIGHLANDS.

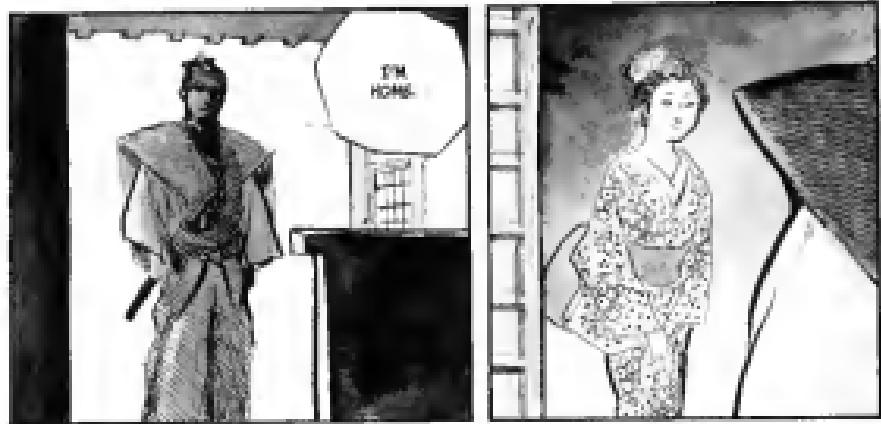


SARU TERRITORY,
THE MILITARY BASTION
OF SHIMSHI

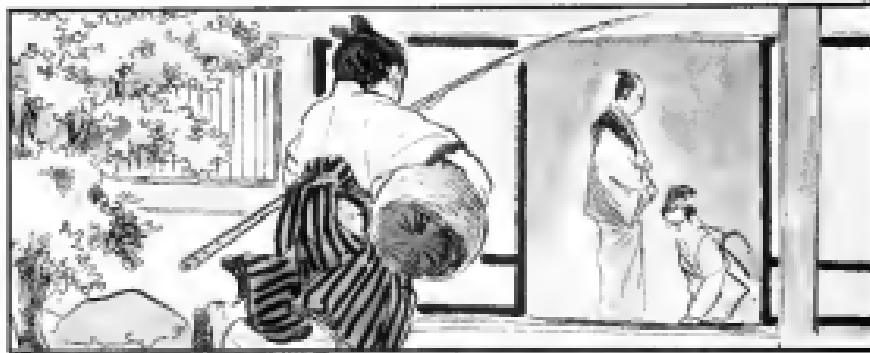
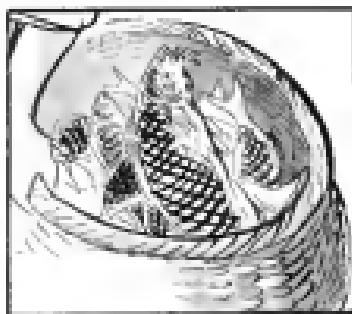
KONANROSHI AWAI
LORD AMANO KAZUO
FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND
ATOKU



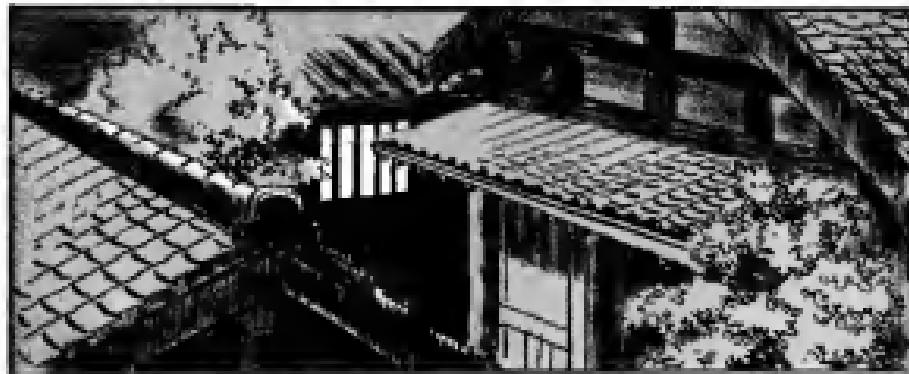










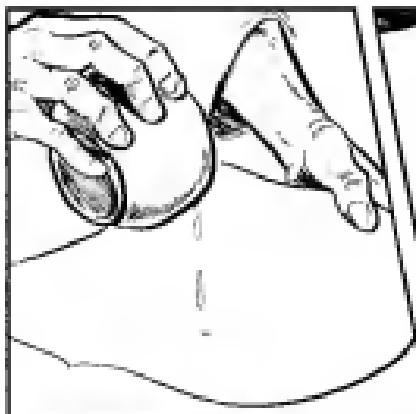












SO WE HAVE TO
BUILD AN AQUEDUCT.
PILE UP EARTH BERMS,
DIG A CHANNEL
THROUGH THEM.

BUT WE NEED
TO BRING IN DIRT AND
GRANITE. ELEVEN MEN TO
CARRY IT, FIFTEEN TO
BUILD IT... FOR EVERY
JOHN OF CEMENT.

THE MAN
CAN'T AFFORD
ANY MORE
HEAL.

WE'VE
USED UP THE
SUBSIDIES.

AND
SOCIAL
RAINY
SEASO...
N.

IT'S
NOT GOING
WELL.





BUT I BORE
YOUR SON BEFORE
I HEARD OF THE
BANISHMENT

I CAN'T GO
BACK NOW. I KNOW
THAT IF I TRIED, YOU'D
HAVE TO TAKE
MY LIFE.

I LIVE AS
ABORAL, ACCEPT
IT EVERY
DAY.

AND
I'VE BEEN
HAPPY.

YOU'D
DESTROY
THAT...?

IF I SHARE
THE JETSON,
OUR SECRET
IS OUT.

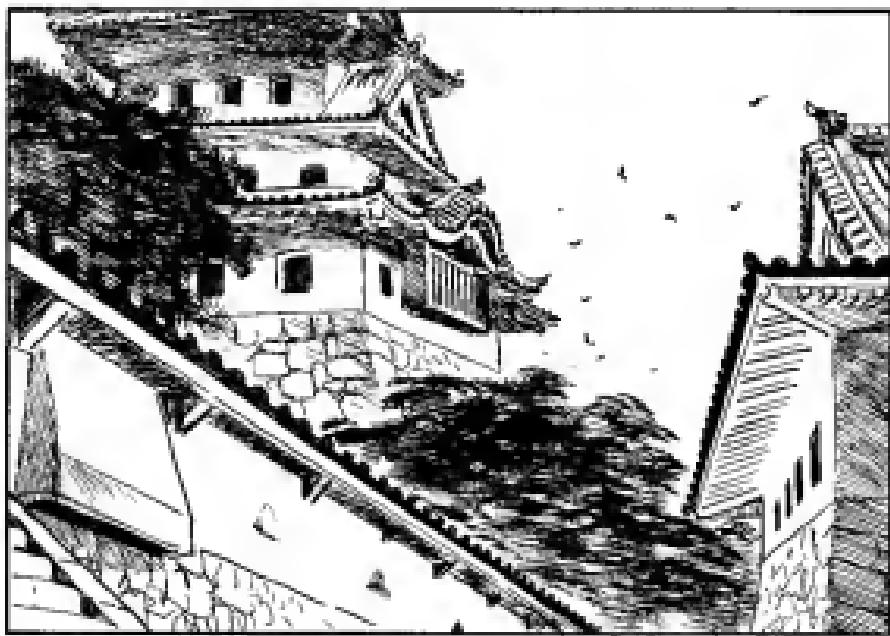
WE
GRASS WILL
WITHER!

WE DON'T LIVE
FOR KOMODORI ANY
MORE. WE SERVE YAMATO-SAMA
AND THE HOLLYWOOD
CREDIT.

BUT MY
FATHER'S A
KOMODORI
MANAGER
SURELY—

ANOTHER.
THAT'S FINAL.

IT'LL BE
IN MY ROOM.
DON'T WAIT
UP.

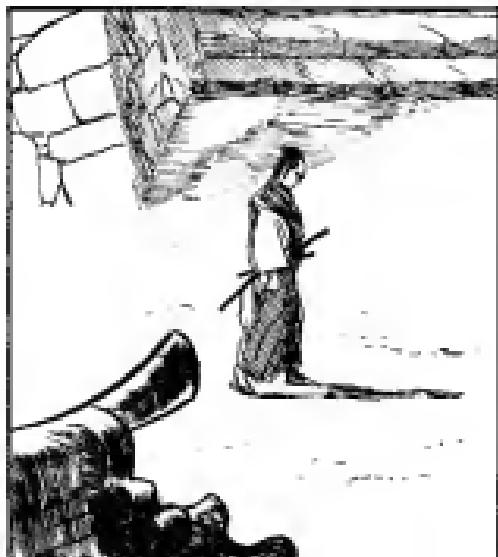




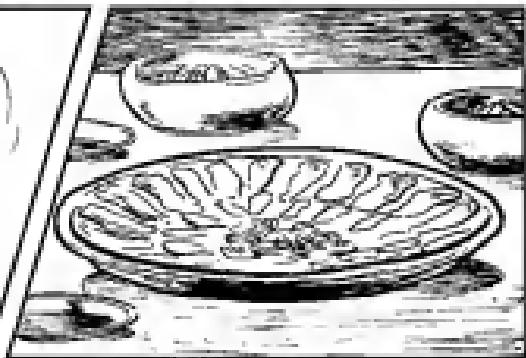


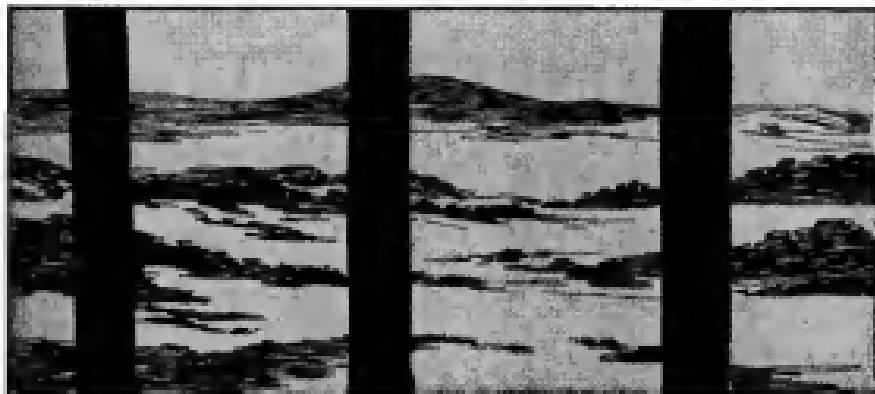
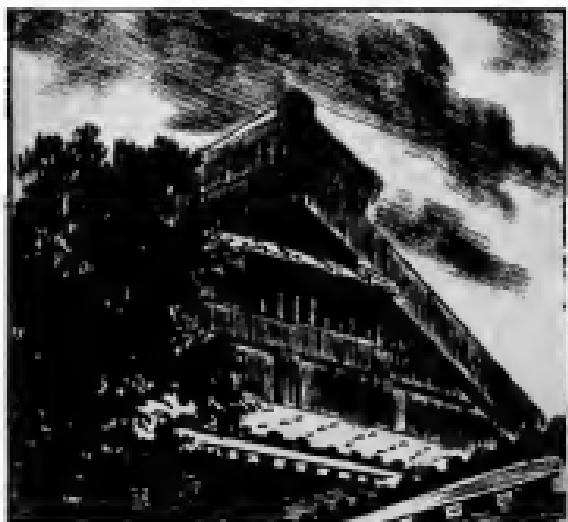
















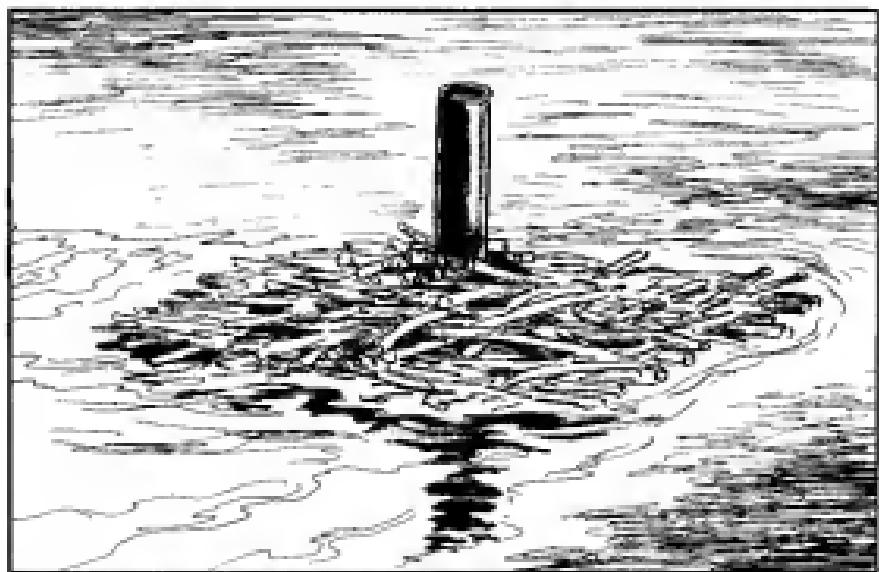
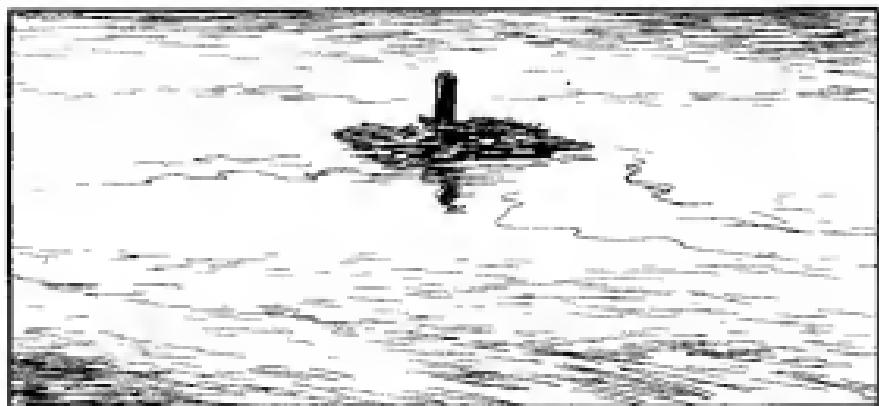


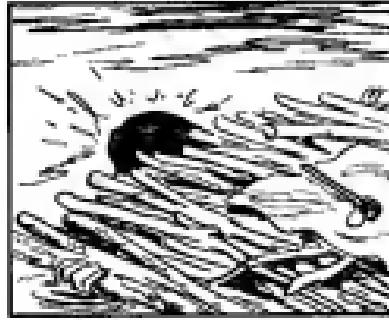
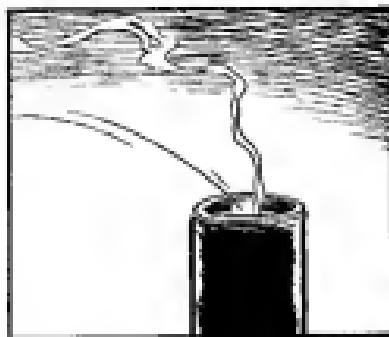
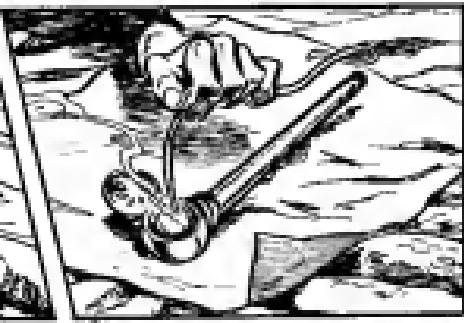
WOLF
FIRE!

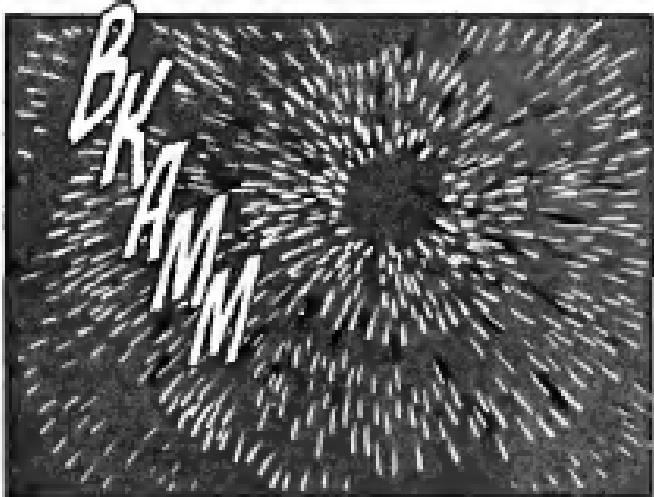


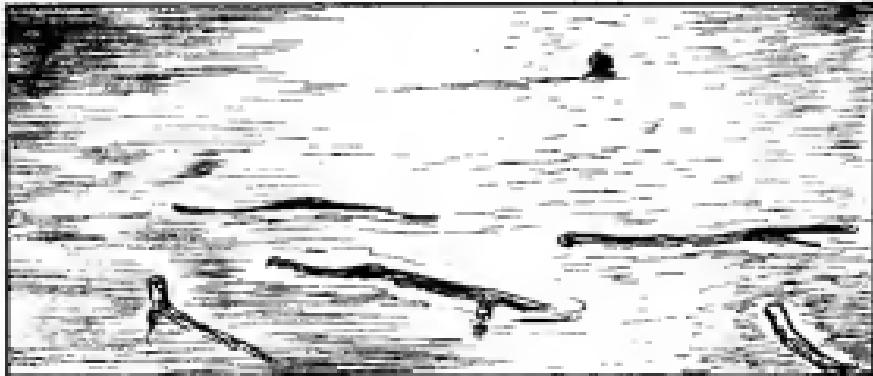
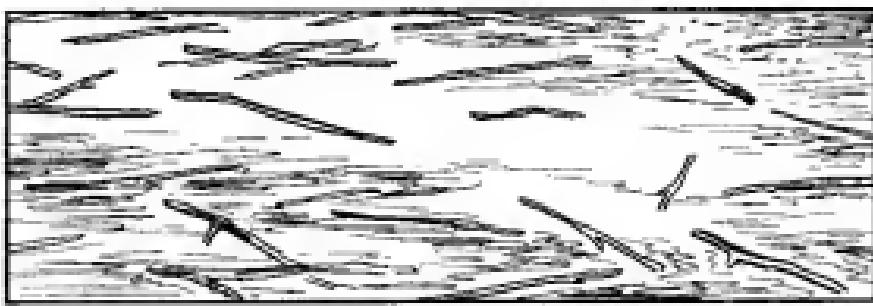
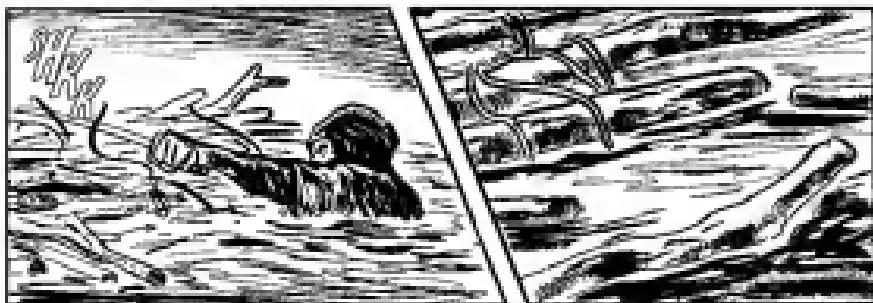
OUR
TIME
HAS
COME.



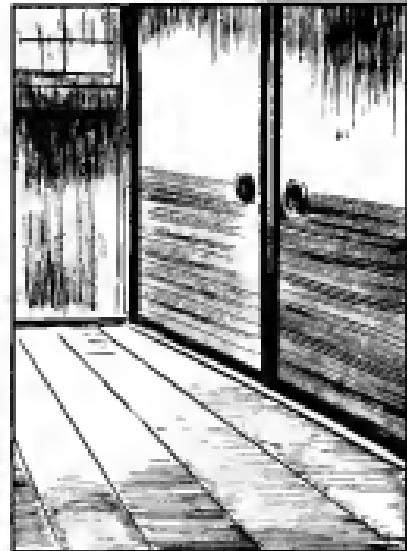


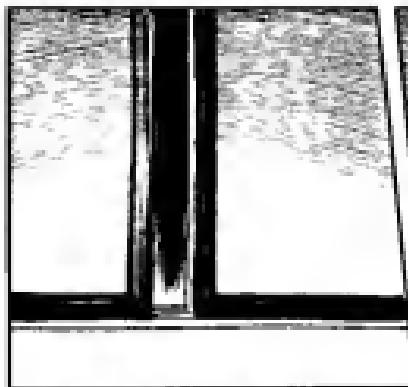


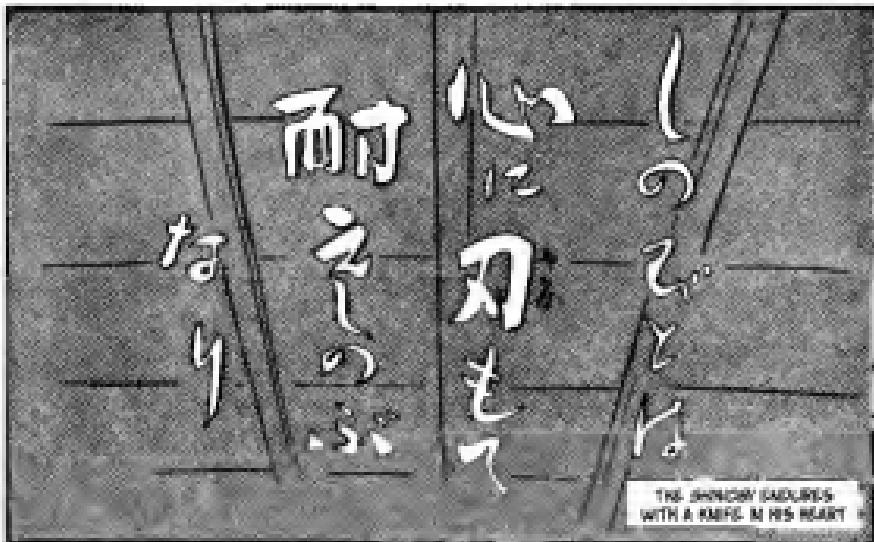


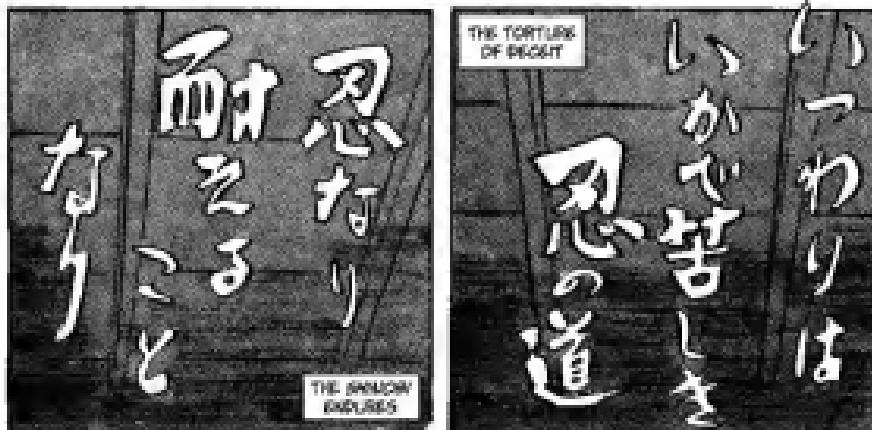






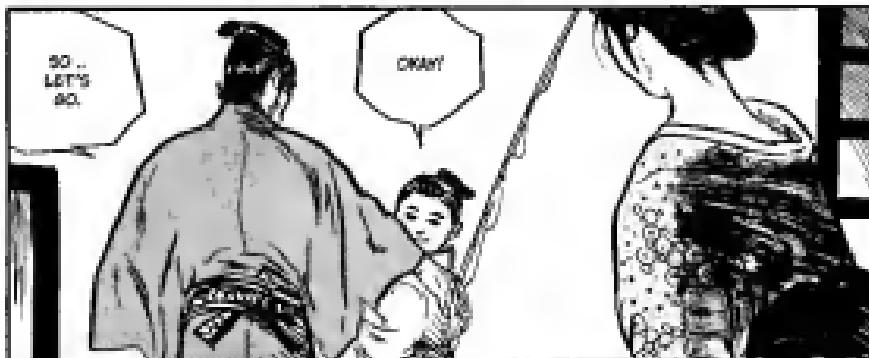




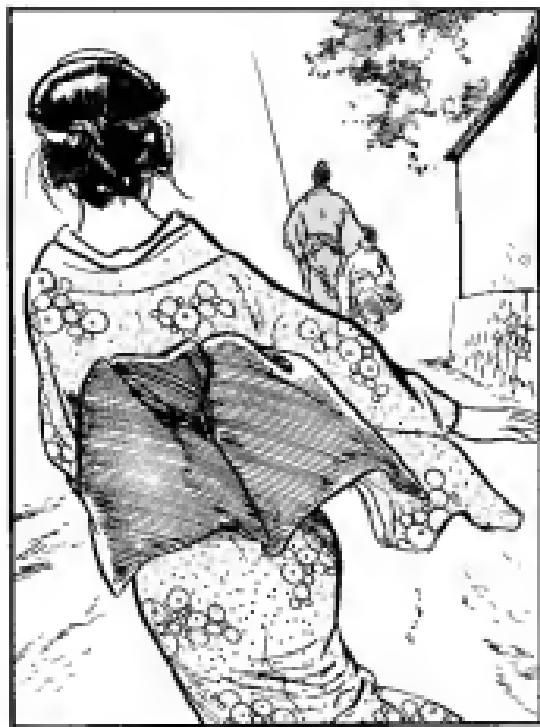


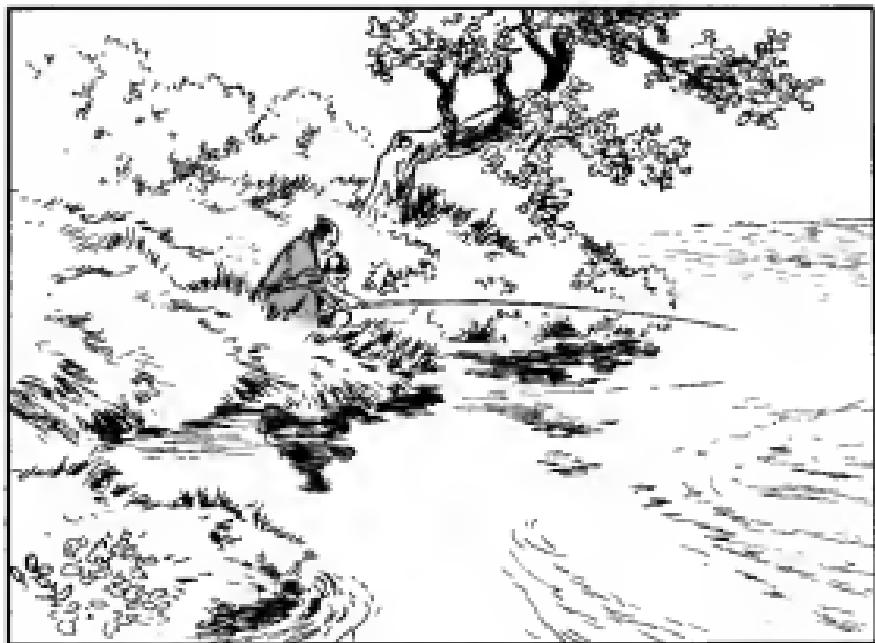




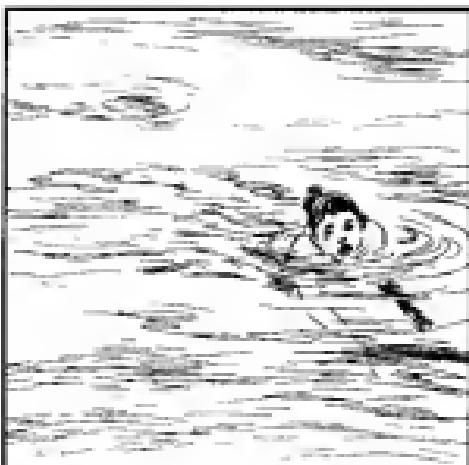
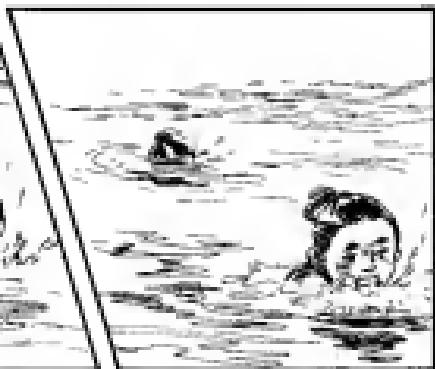
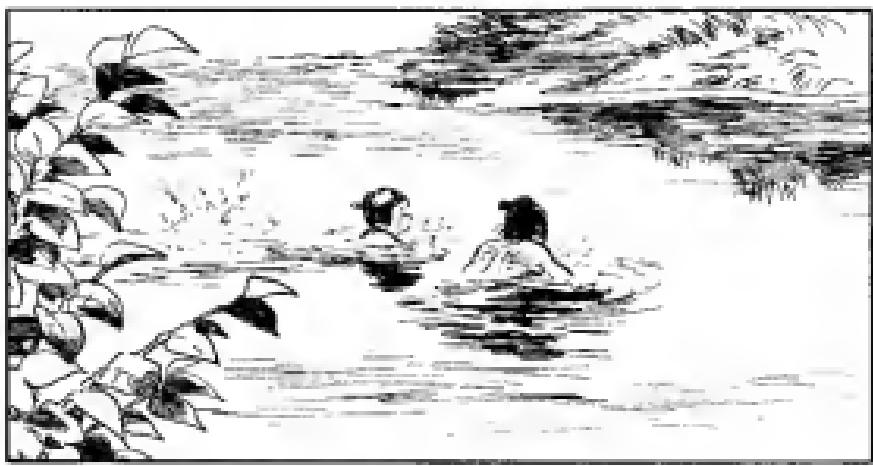




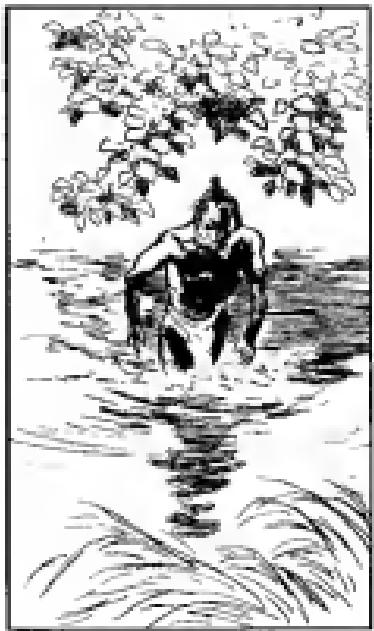


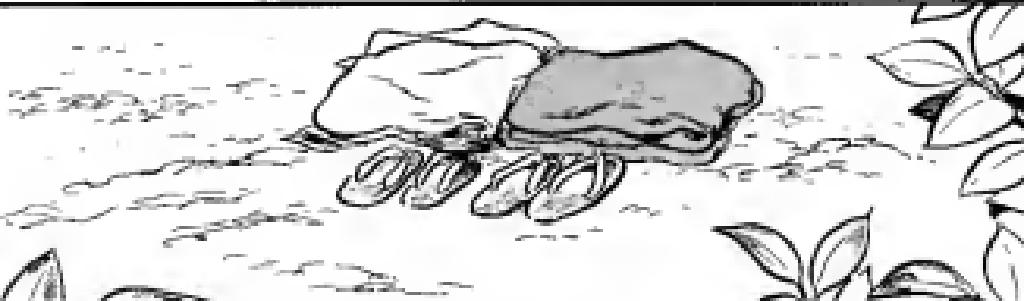


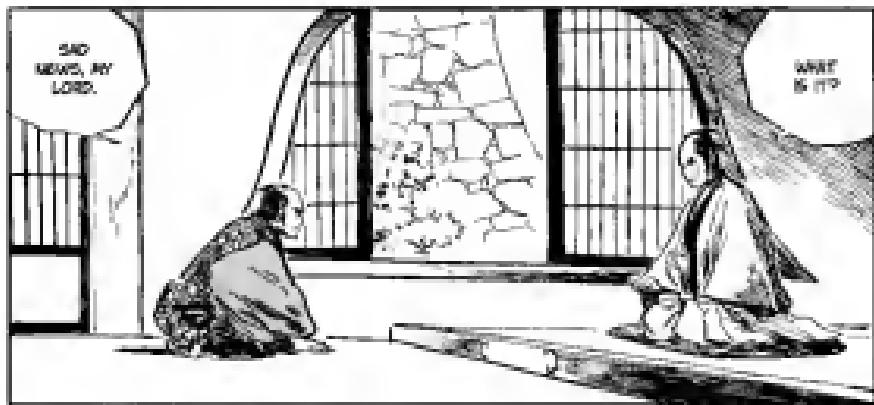








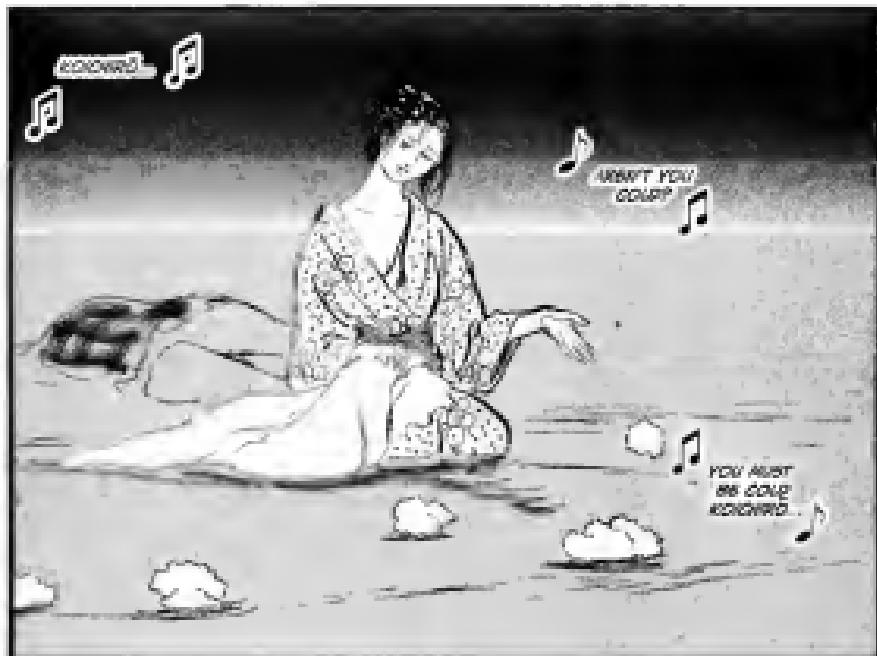




THREE DAYS LATER, JUSPO
RUTSUNMAR ICHEBBI
SEARCHED THE BANKS OF
THE CHALUA FOR A SPOT
TO MINE GRAVEL.





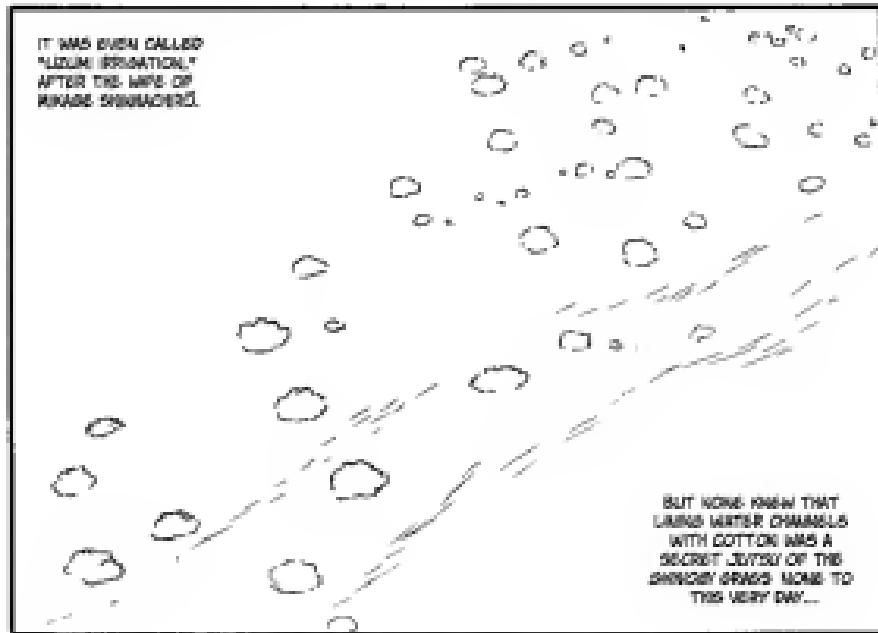




THE HISTORIES OF KOMOROSHI HAN
SPEAK OF LINING IRRIGATION CANALS
WITH COTTON WADDINGS TO PREVENT
WATER FROM SEEPING OUT
THROUGH THE PLURGS.



IT WAS EVEN CALLED
"ALUMINI IRRIGATION"
AFTER THE NAME OF
MIKADO SHIMONAKO.



BUT KONO-KINOSH
LINED WATER CHANNELS
WITH COTTON WAS A
SECRET KEPT BY THE
SHIMONAKO DYNASTY
TO THIS VERY DAY...



the hundred and
twenty-sixth

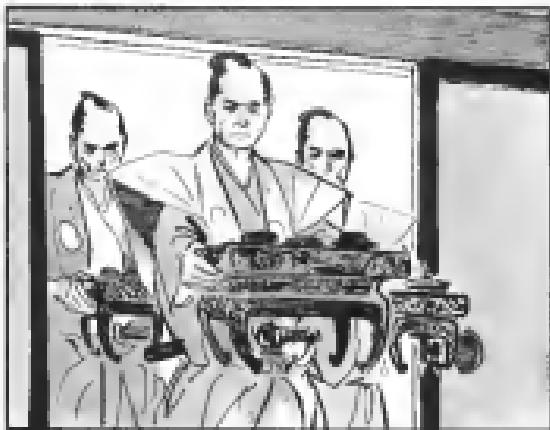
**Breakfast,
Lunch,
Snack,
and
Brunch**

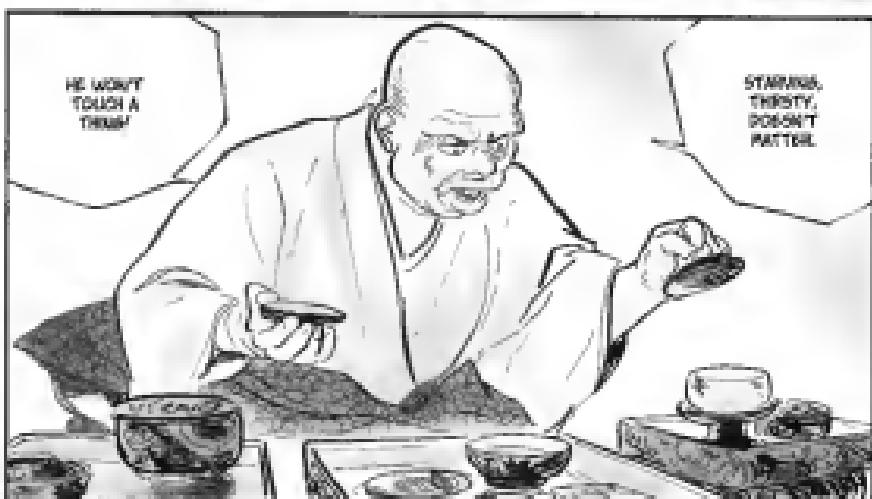












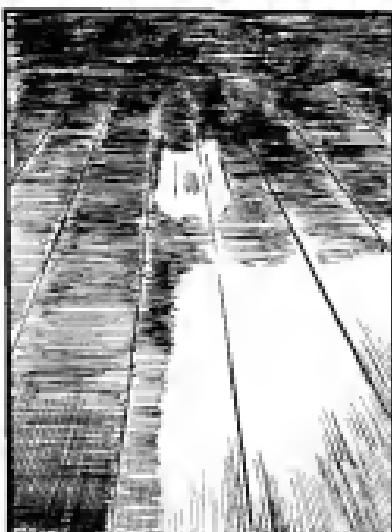


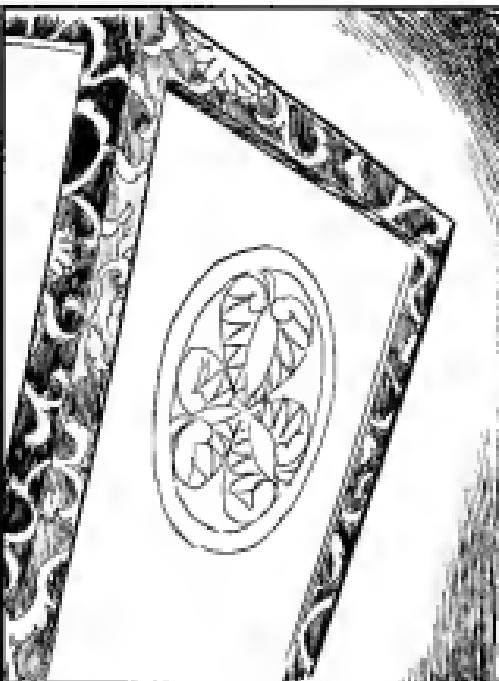






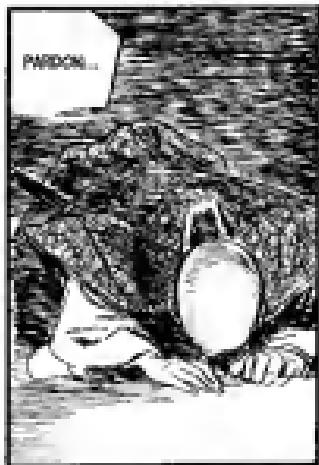


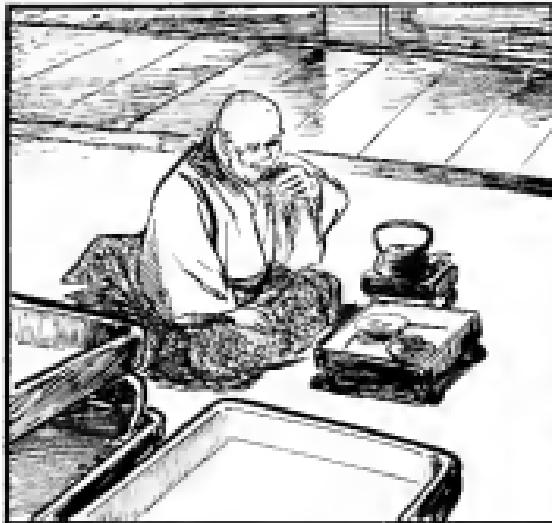
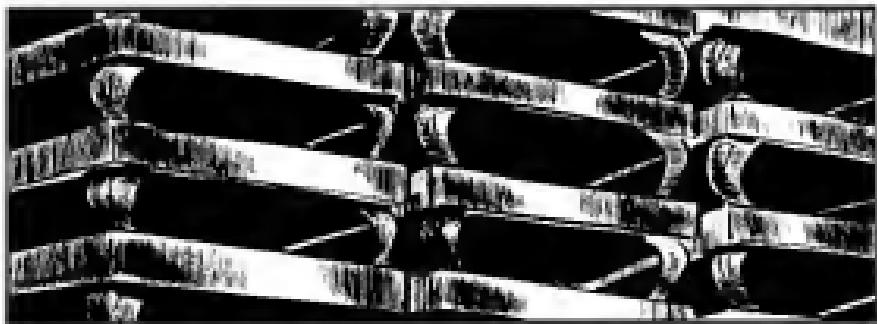


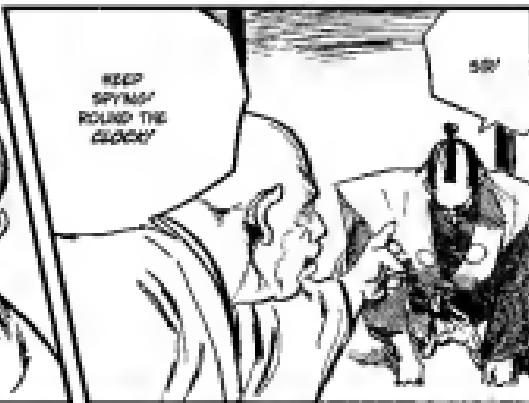






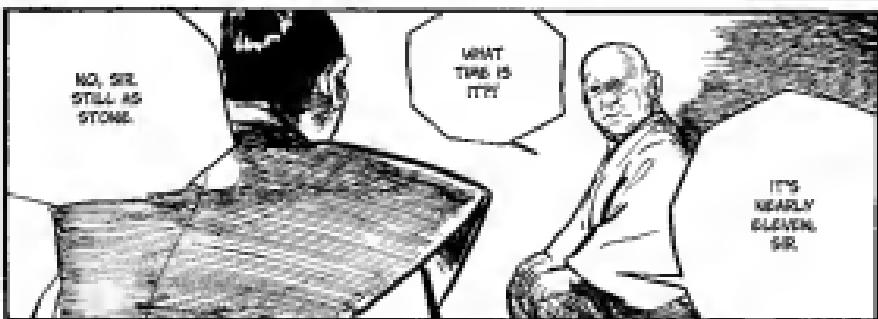
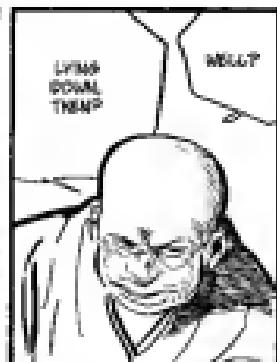






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WHAT YOU
APPROVE OF?

IMPERIAL WINE
TALKING ABOUT THE
FAMOUS YAMATO RETSUDO.
HE HAS THE STRENGTH OF
FIRE. HE CAN LAST
UNTIL MORNING.

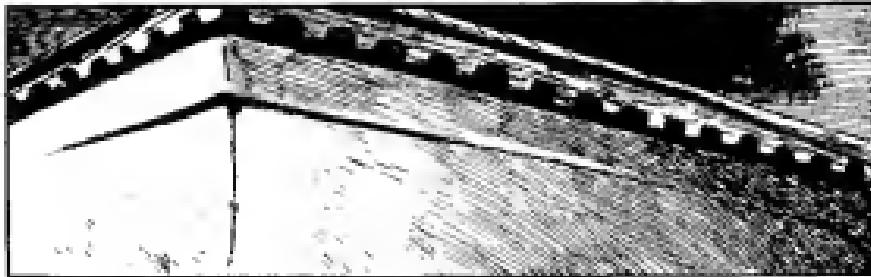
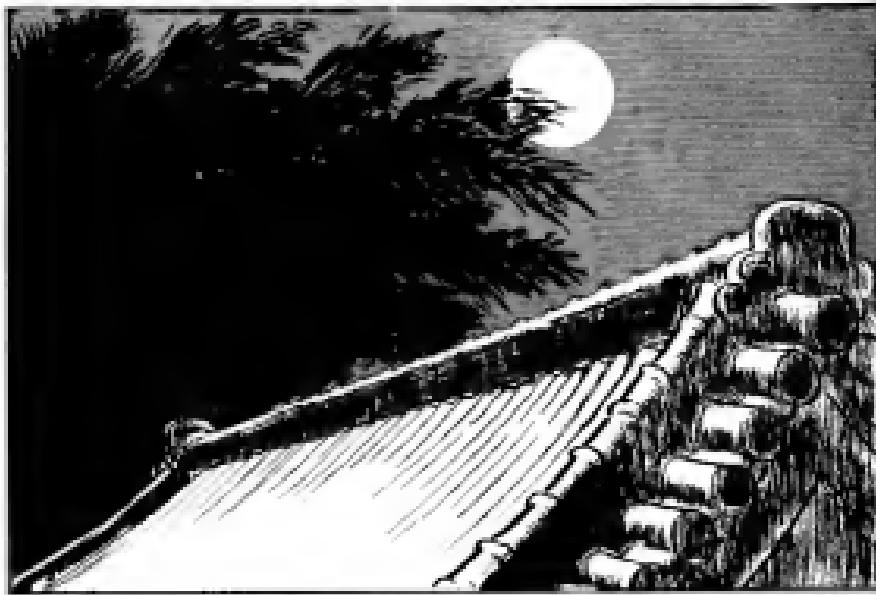


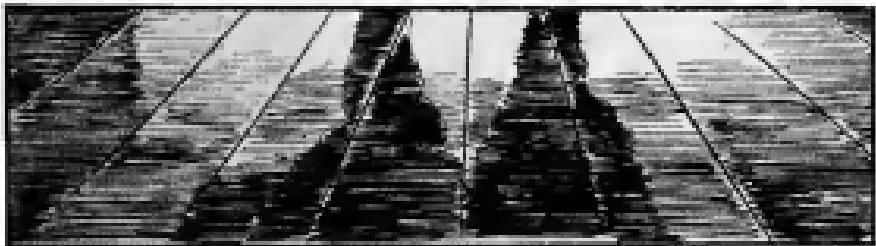
NO
FOOD, DRINK,
SLEEP. NOT A
TWITCH

A DAMN
PROFOUND.

DON'T KNOW IF IT'S
SOME JUNKY PSEU DO THING,
BUT IT'S STILL STUPID
IDIOTIC!



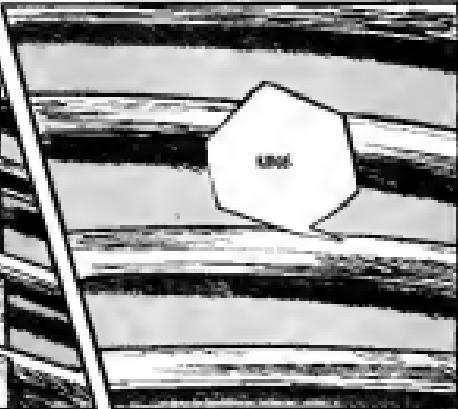
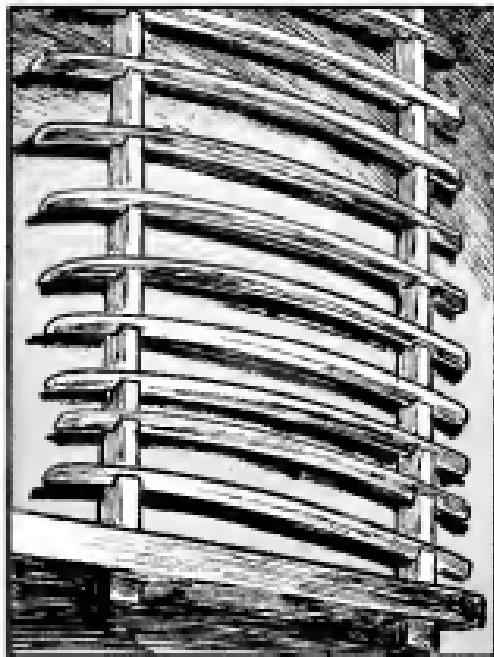


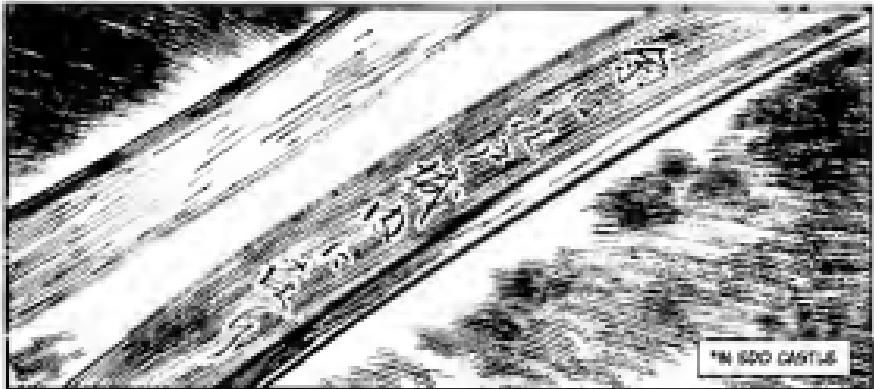
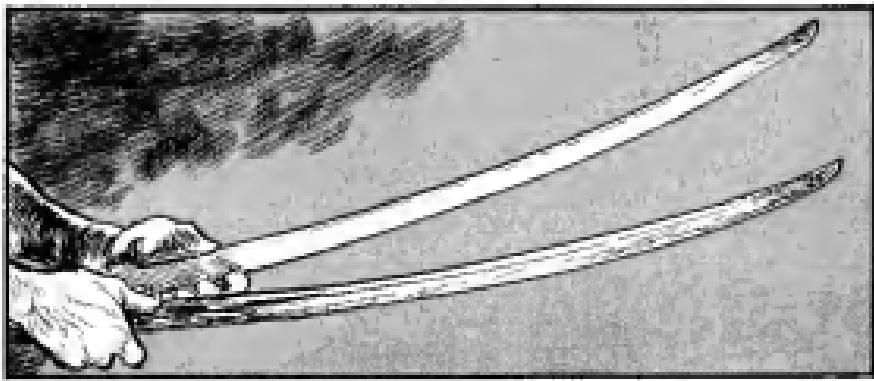




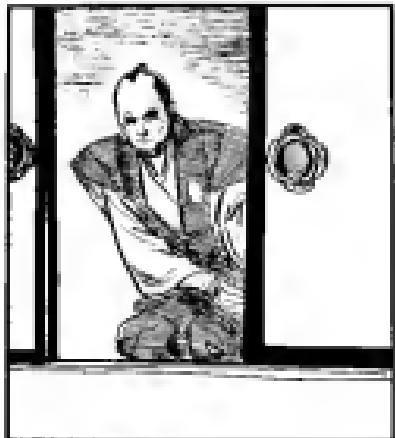
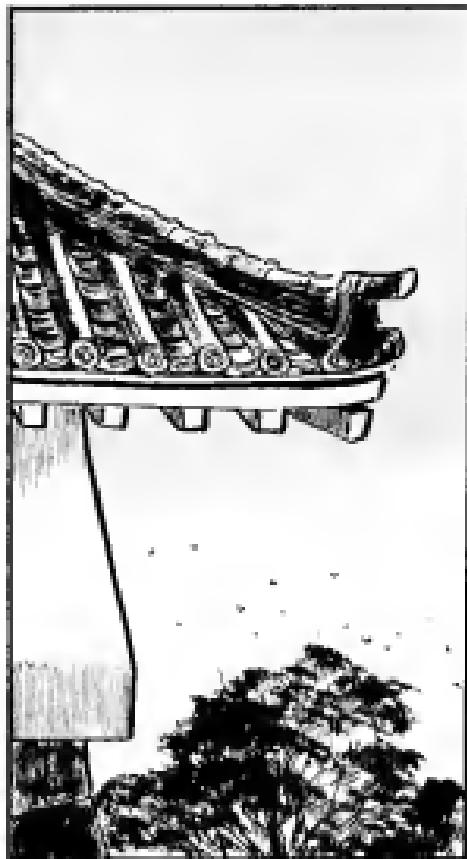
AT ABOUT THAT SAME TIME,
OKAMADA SHIGERU, KAWABUCHI,
AND CHIBA, HAD REACHED
THE YAKUZI COMPOUND.



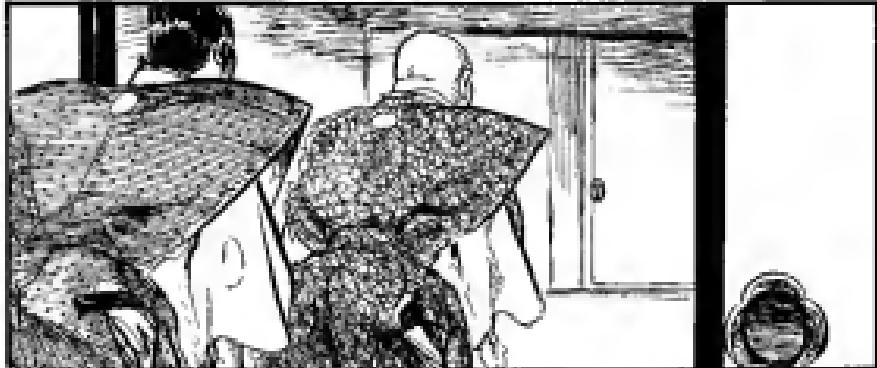


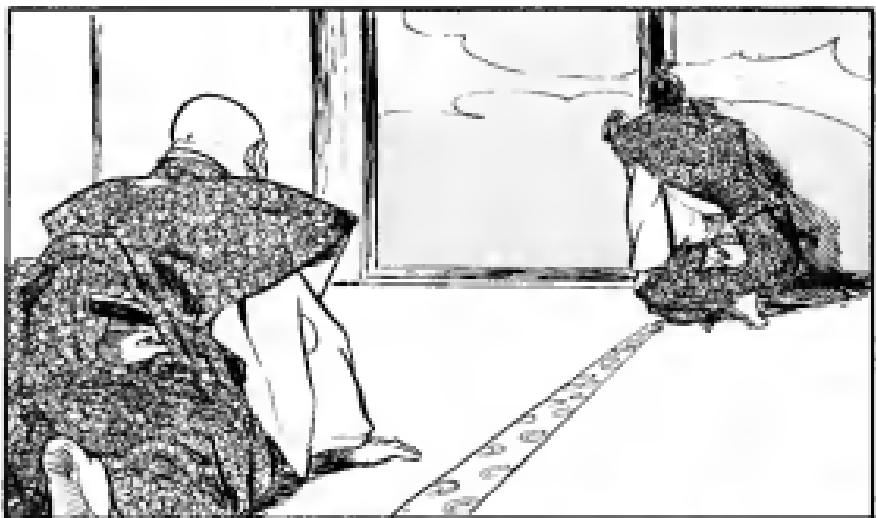


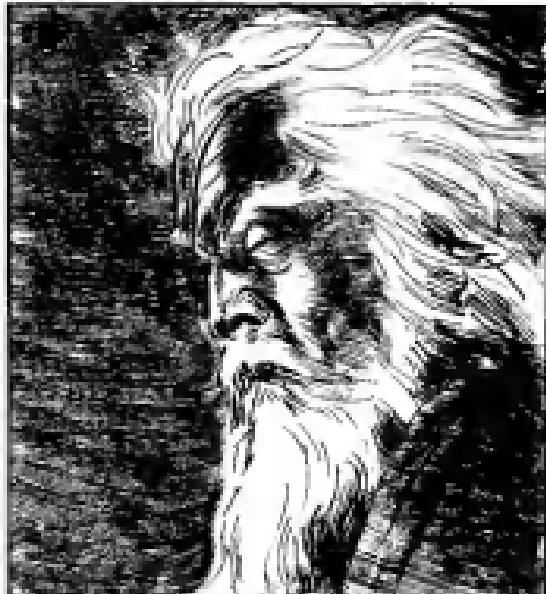
THE EDO CASTLE

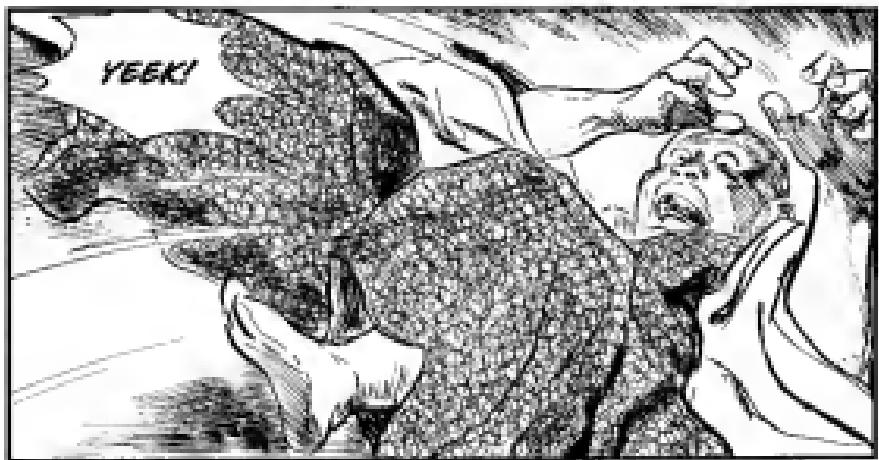














WHEN THE MORNING
SUN BURNS... A
SHADOW'S STRENGTH
IS AT AN END.

AS TIME DRAGS ON,
EASY TO SLEEP SOUNDS,
BUT WITHOUT FOOD OR
WATER, FOUR MORE
HOURS...



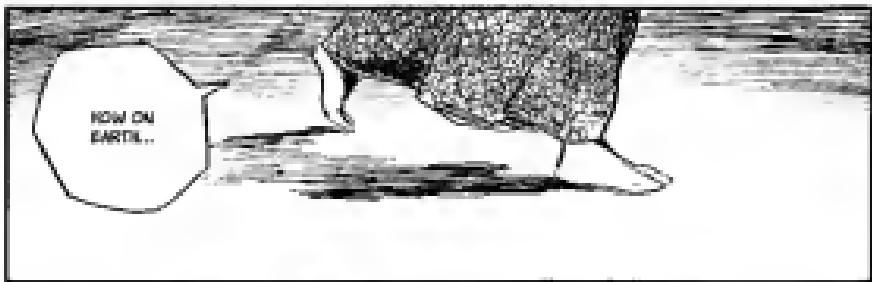
ONLY THREE
DAYS... IS
THIS ENOUGH?
NO...



WILL
THE GRASS
BE IN
THERE?

I HADN'T FULLY
RECOVERED FROM
PAINTING IT TO...





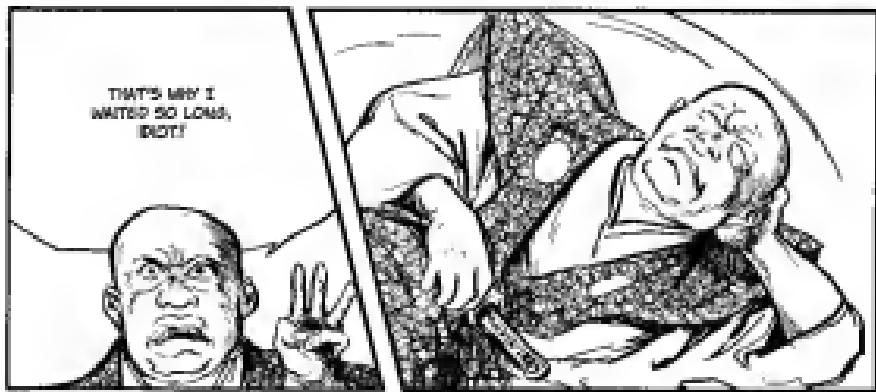


WE'RE ABOUT THAT WAY.

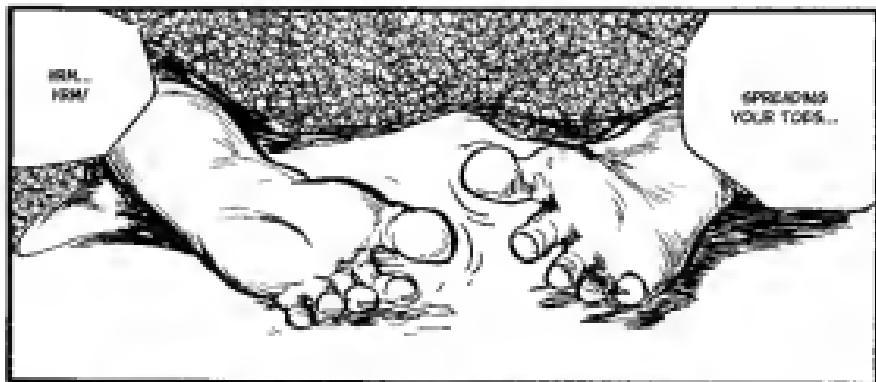




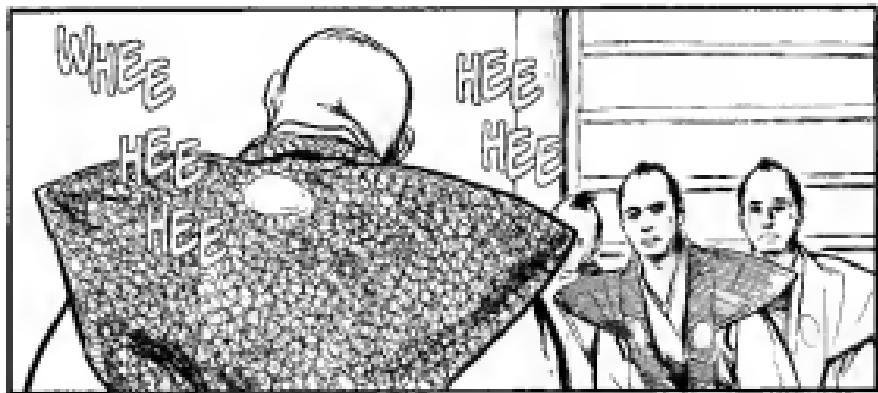












LIKE YOU
SAY, HE'S A
ARCHER.

A CROWN,
NO USE.

IT'S
HOSTAGE A
MURDER

A DAMN
SHADOW

Hrrr Hrrr
Rrrr Rrrr

"A TORCH
NEVER LIGHTS
YOUR BACK."

I FORGOT
TO LOOK
BEHIND ME.

WHEN I FO...
SHADOW

THE
ARCHER IS THE
SHADOW.





NEXT...
HOW TO GET
HIS SERVANT
AS FRIEND...

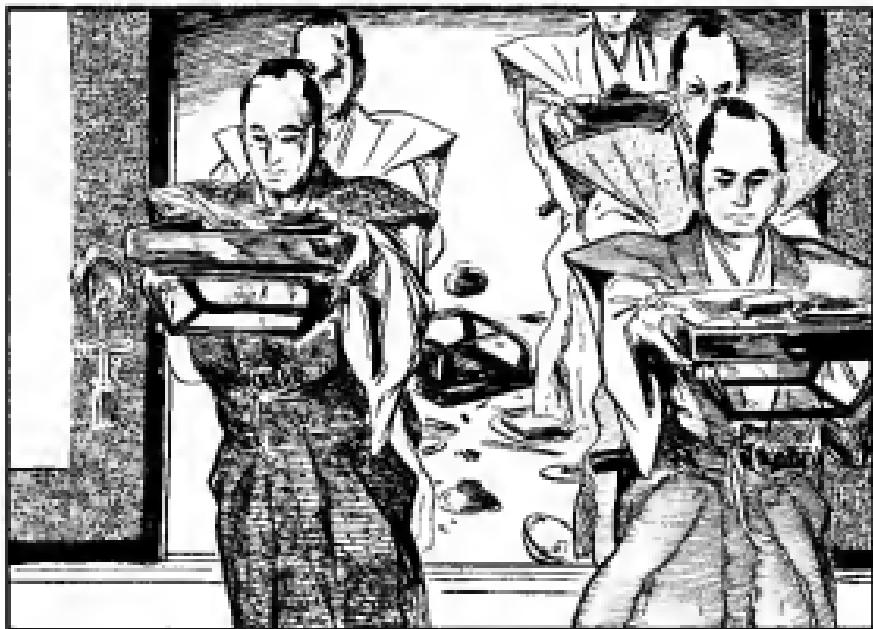
THAT'S IT!

THE DAY AFTER
TOMORROW OUR LORD
VISITS TOSHOJIU SHRINE.
THEY'LL PURIFY THE CASTLE—
EVERYONE MUST HAVE
A RITUAL BATH!

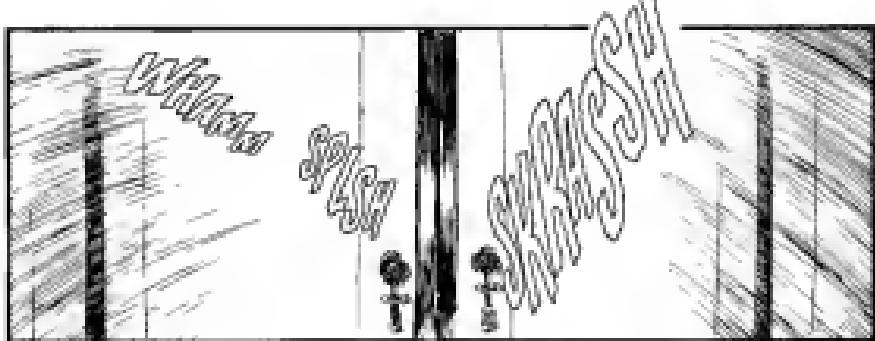
RETRODÖJ'S
NO EXCEPTION!
SERVANT HIS CLOTHES
WILL HE
BATHES!

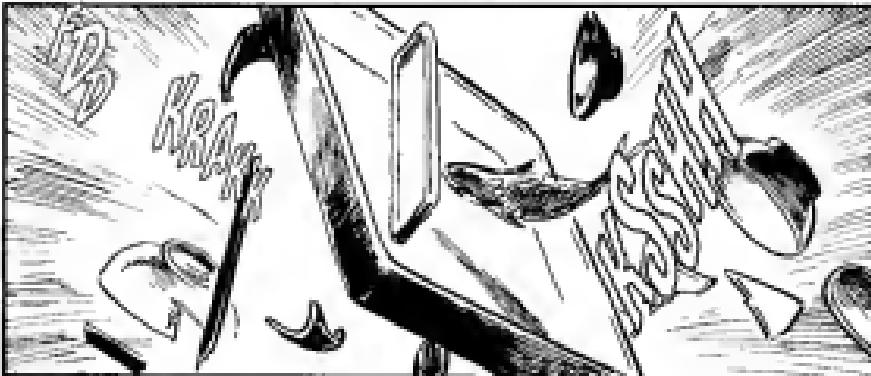
GO NOW!!







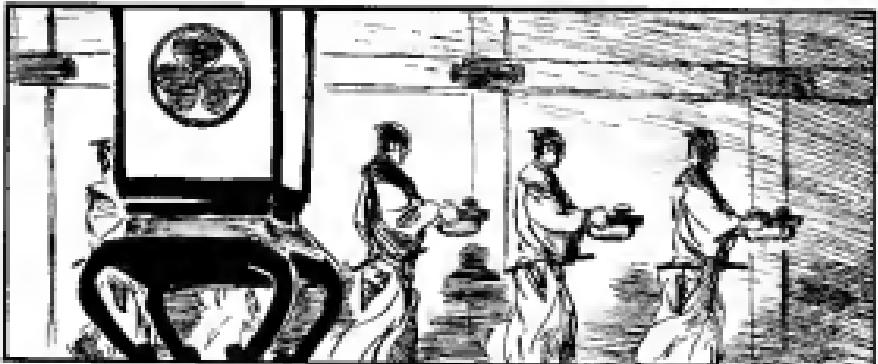




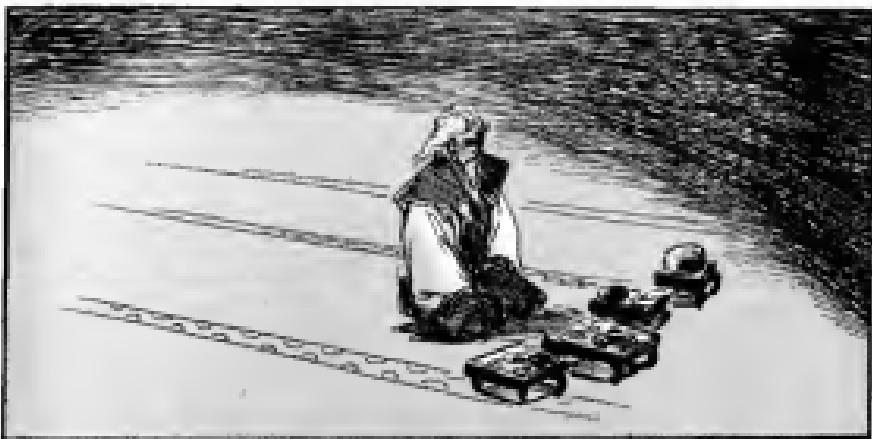
HEE HEE,
HEE HEE AND
CUT, IN AND
CUT!

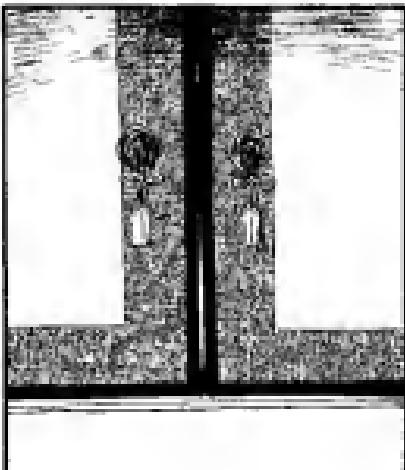
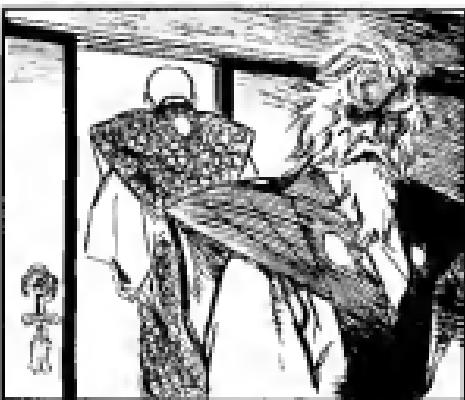
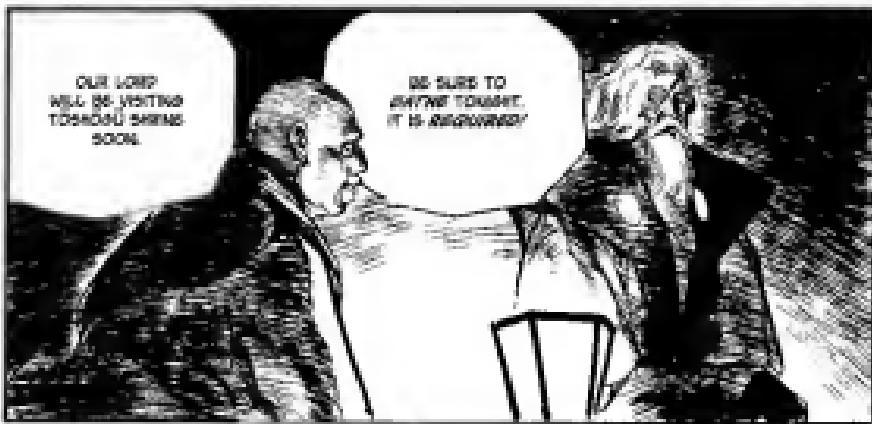
NOT A
SECOND OF
SILENT

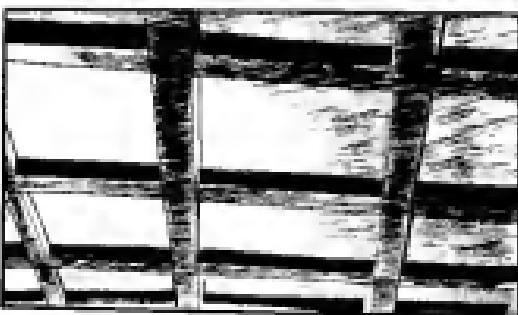


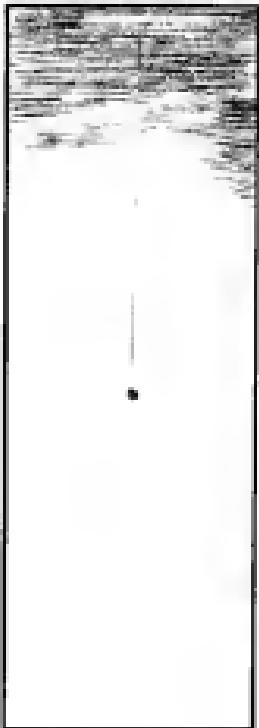










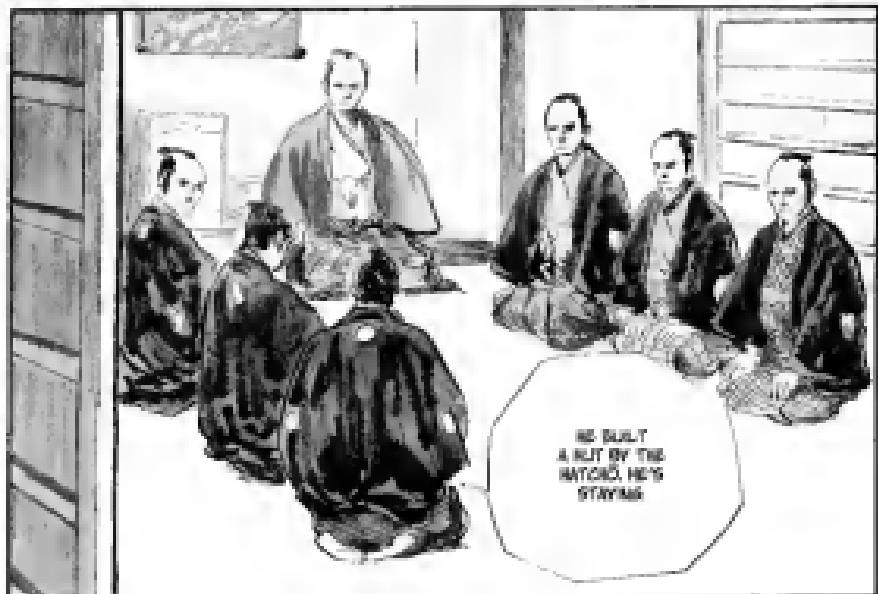
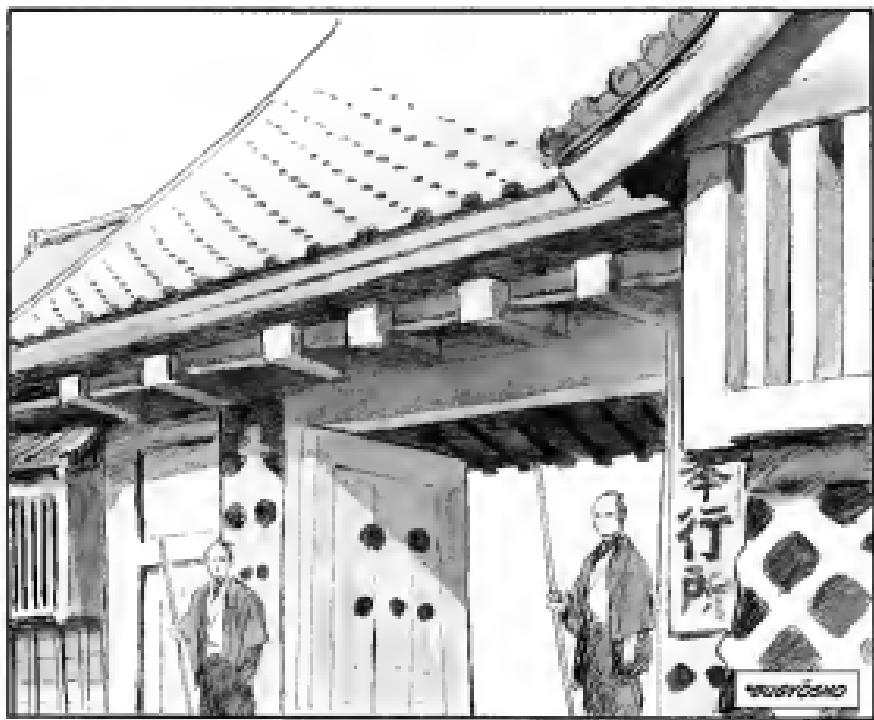




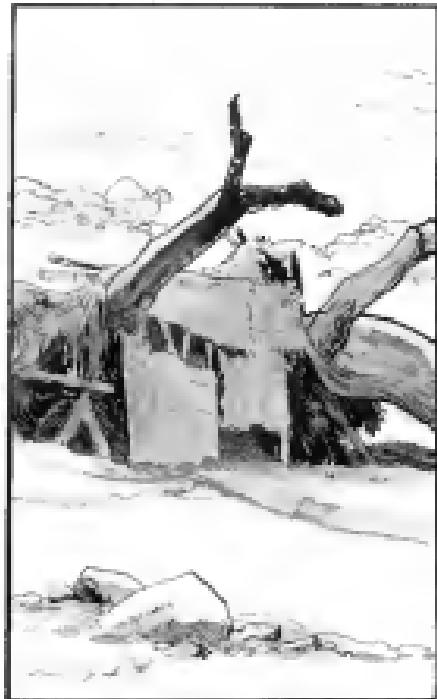
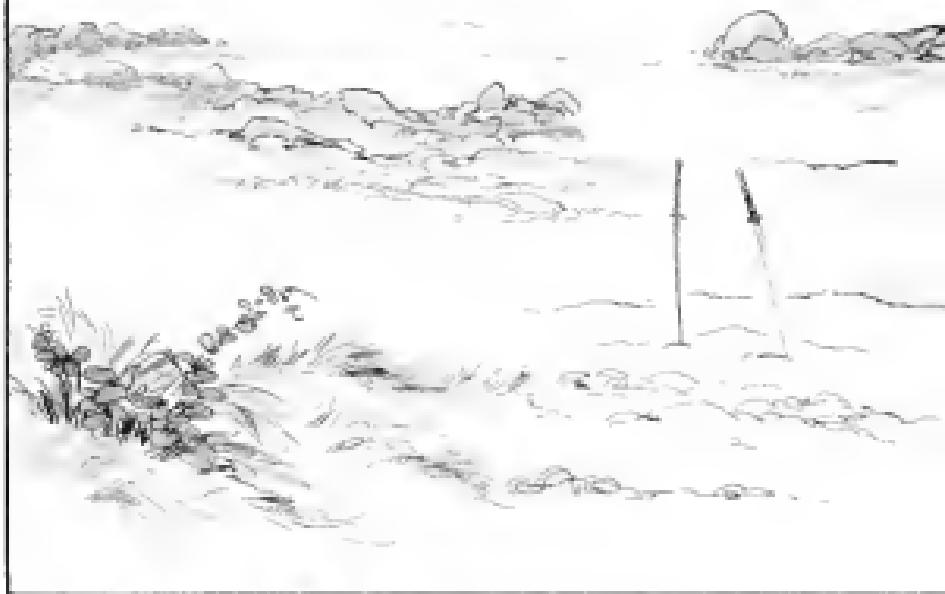
the hundred and
twenty-seventh

By His
Own
Hand

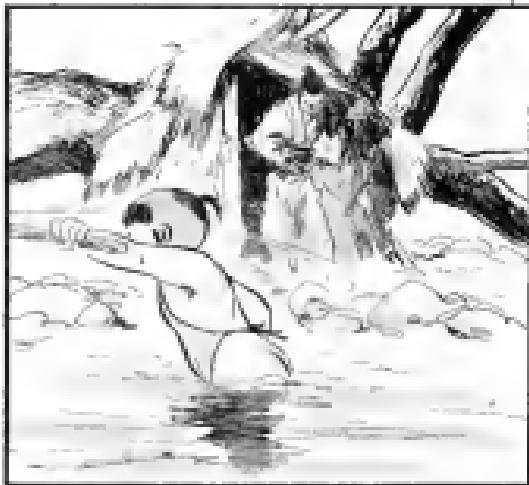
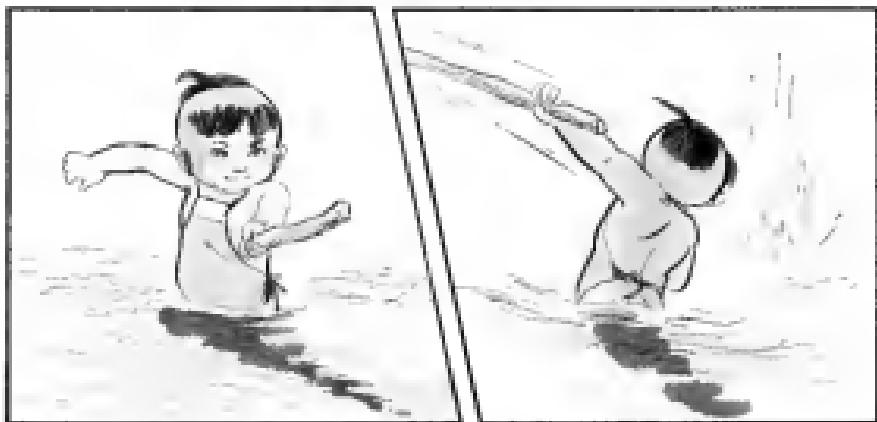




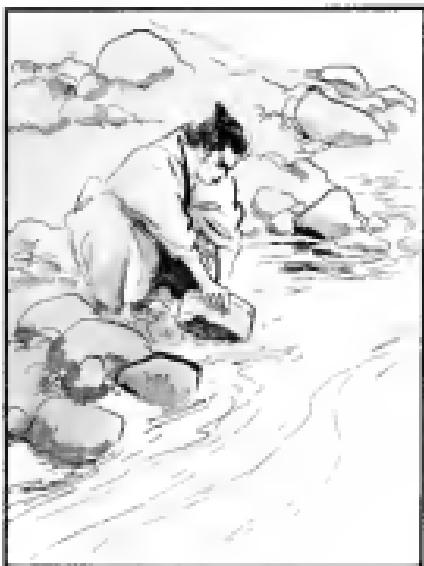




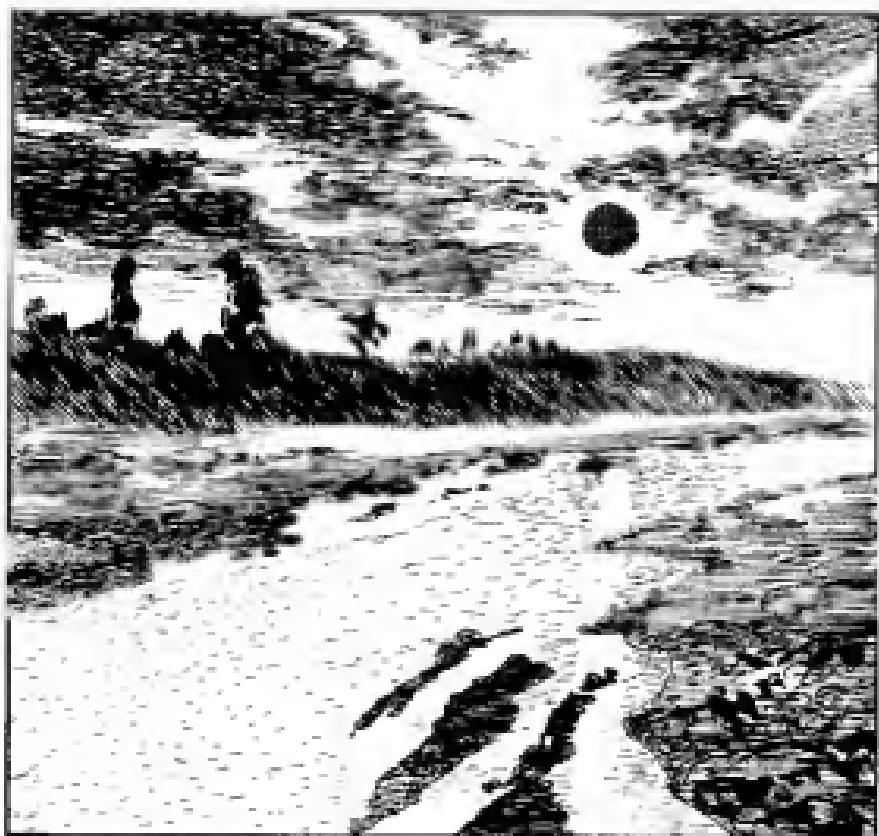


















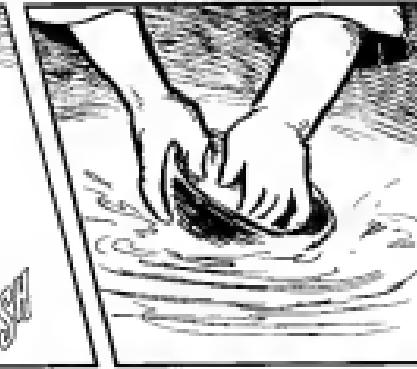
YOU CALL
THAT FRIENDSHIP?
HE JUST
RESCUED YOU!

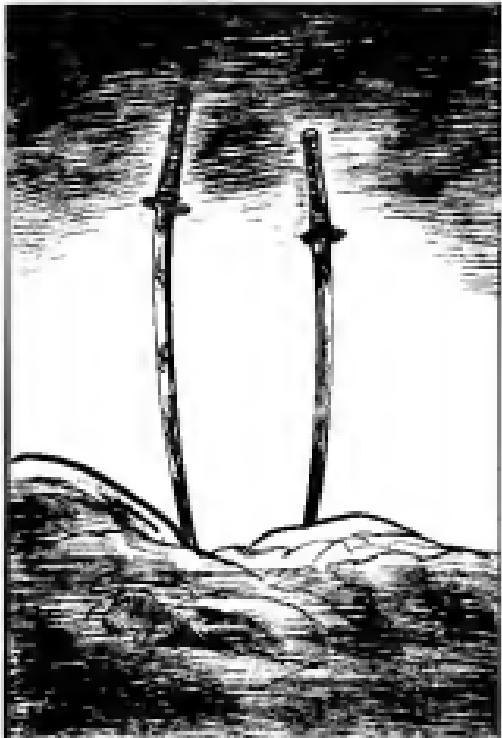
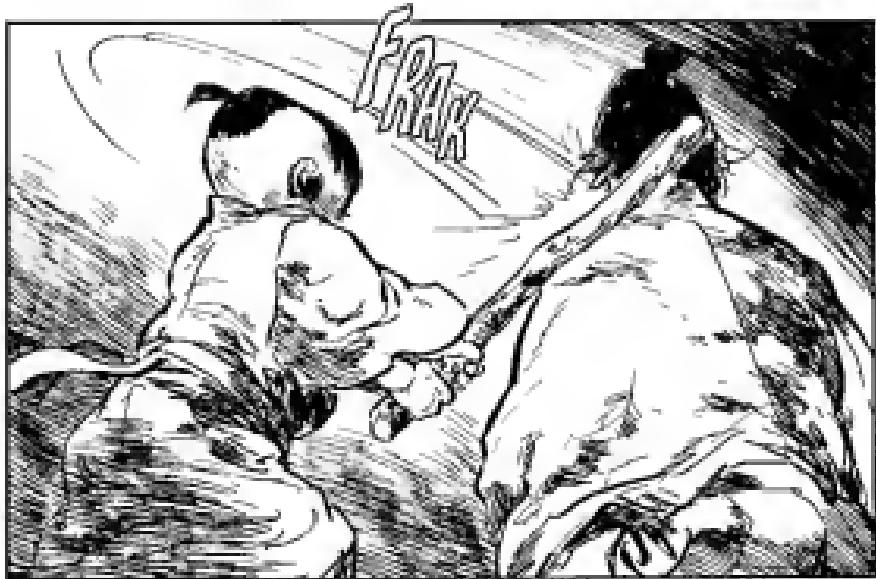
YEAH...
BUT HE DON'T
LOOK AMBIE AT
THE KID.

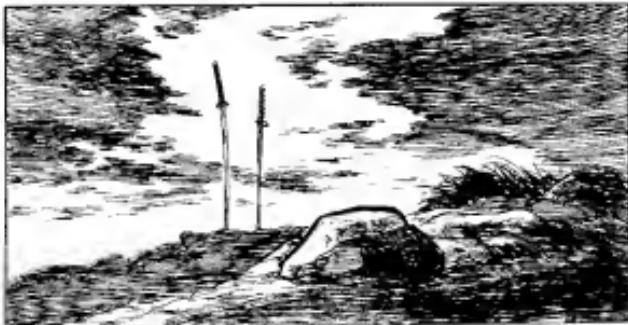
SO WHAT
ELSE COULD
IT BE?

YEAH...
MAYBE...

HE MUST
BE TEACHING
SOMETHIN'.









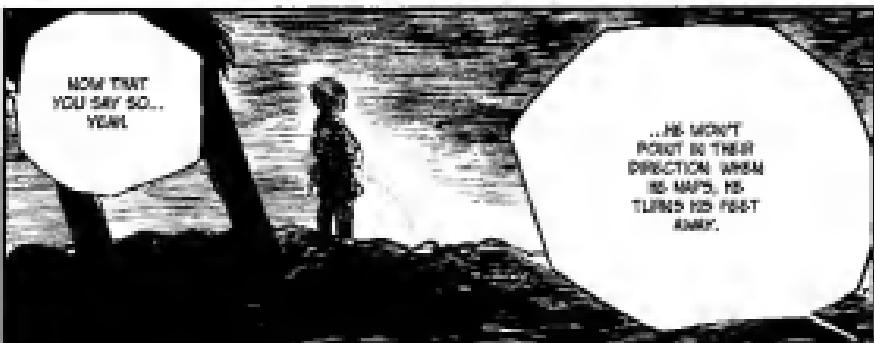
YEAH, I'VE
BEEN WONDERIN',
TOO...

STRANGI...
RATED THEM OF...
CRANES

NUK
G-GRANARY



IF THOSE
CRANES, THERE'S
DEAD FOOL UNDER
'EM, A RACED AT
LEAST

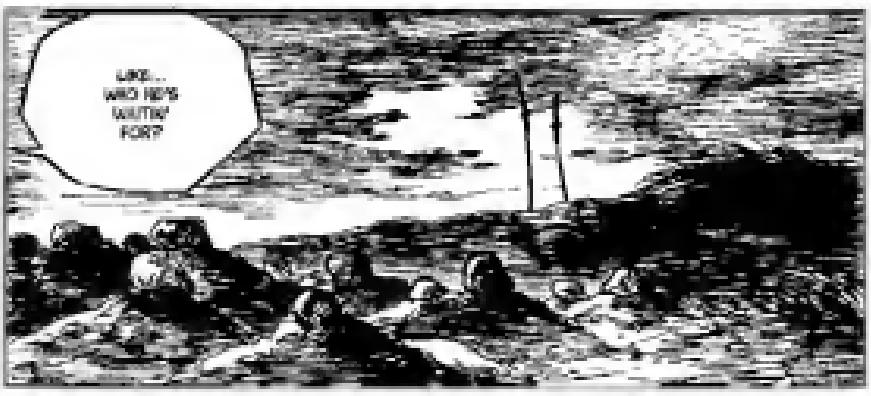




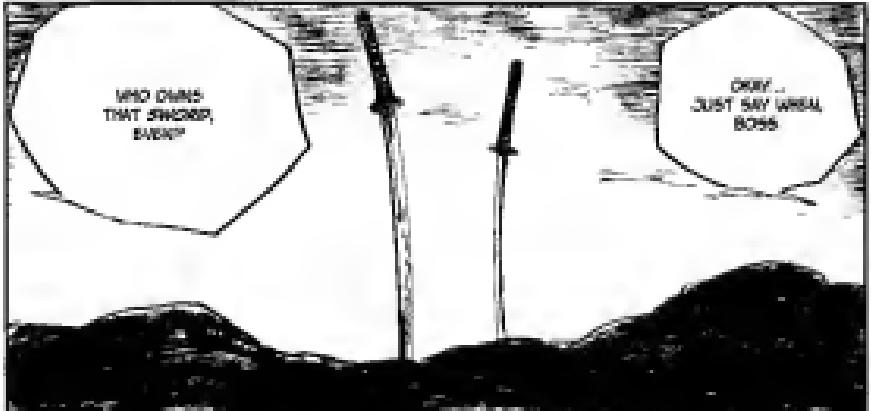
IN HIS CHILD'S
WAY, I THINK HE'S
PAYING RESPECT.

YES, I
THINK THEY'RE
GRANDES.

SO...IF WE
DID ONE UP, WE
WASN'T LEARN
SOMETHING...

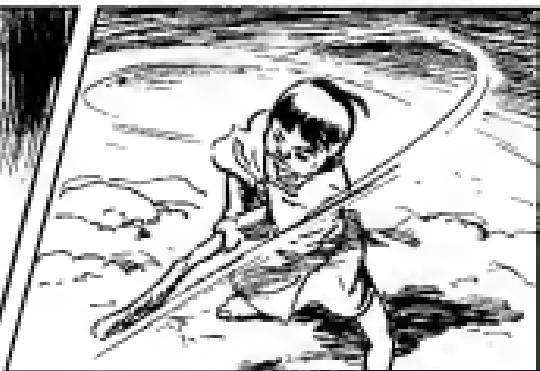
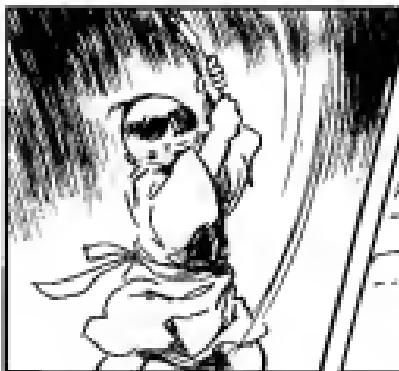


LINE...
WHO HE'S
WALKIN'
FOR?



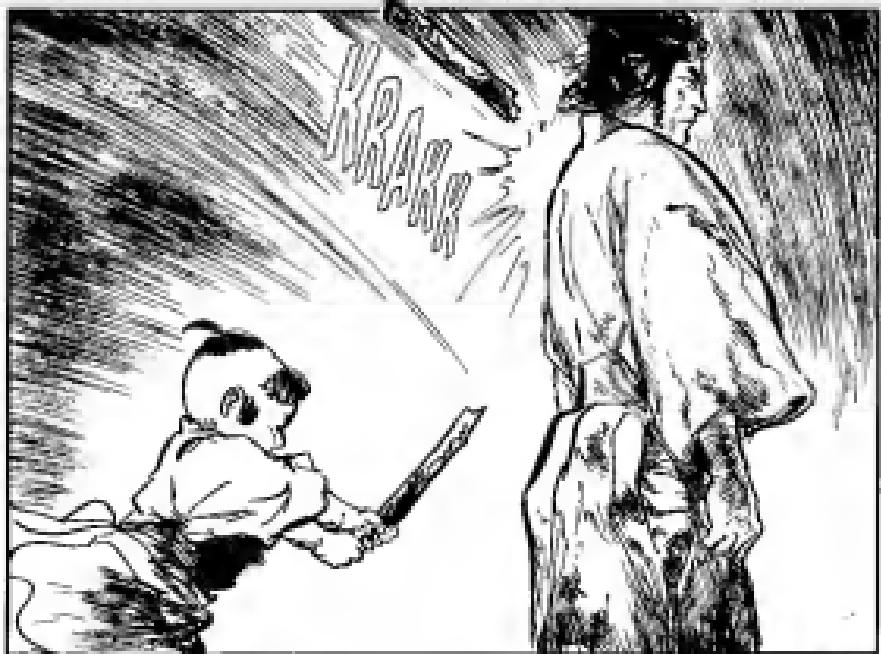
WHO OWNS
THAT SWORD,
BAM?

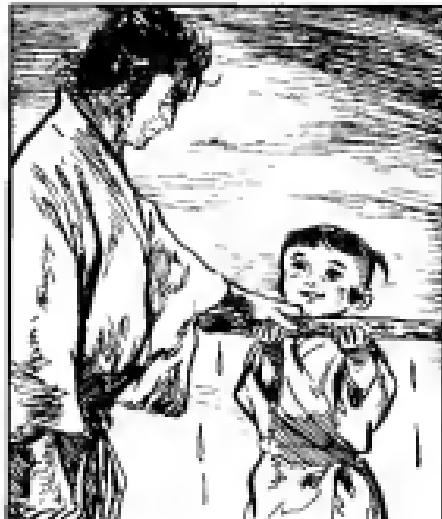
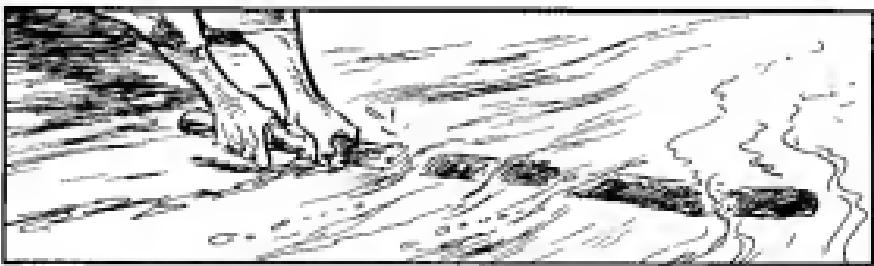
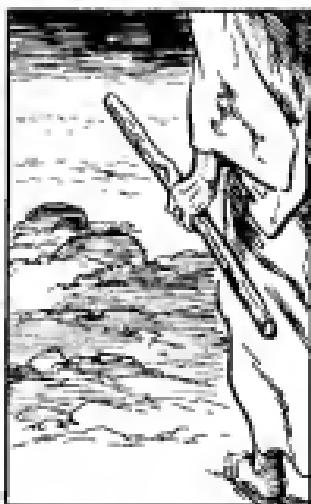
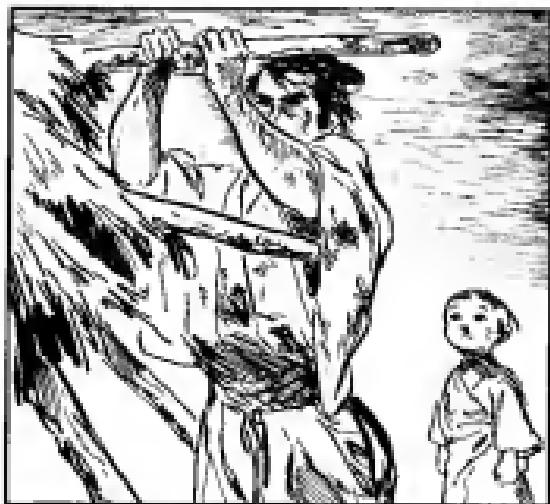
DRAY...
JUST SAY WHEAT
BOSS

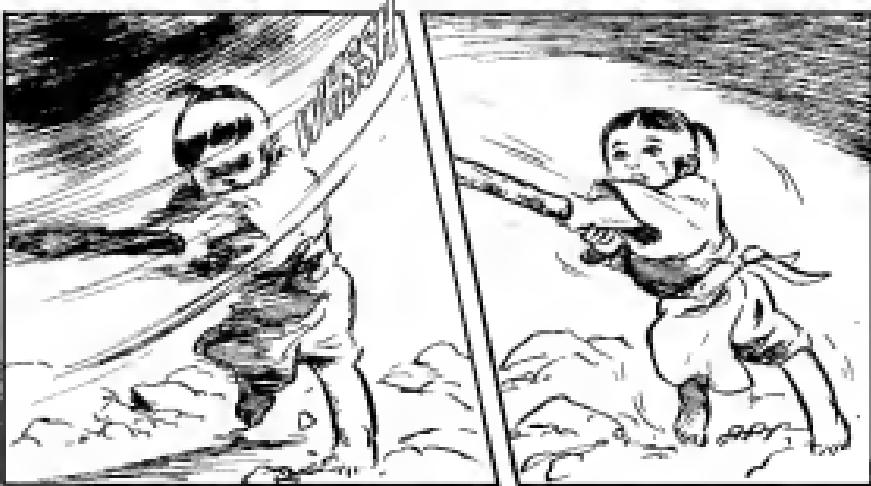


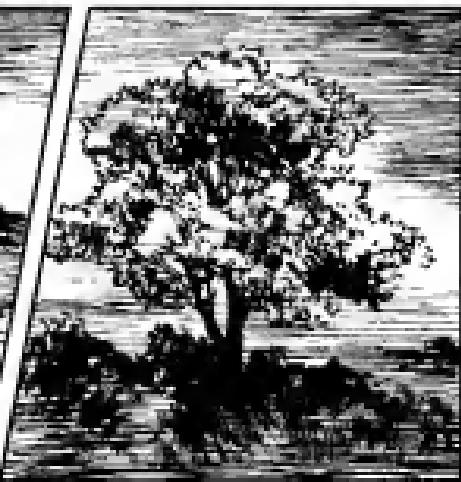
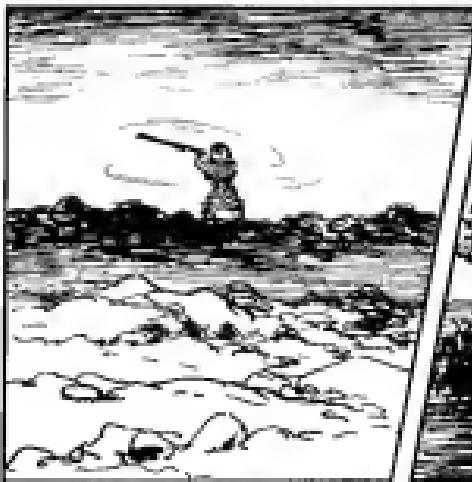


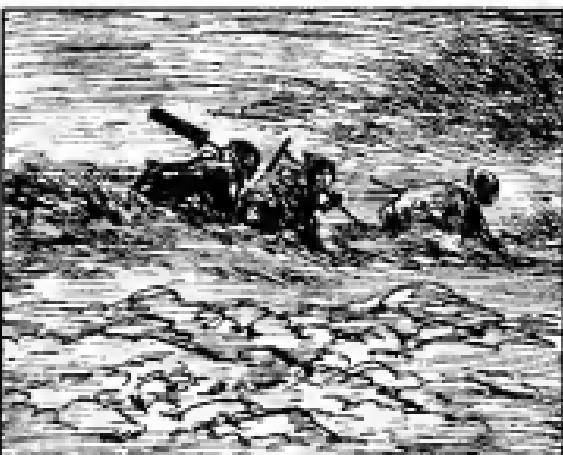
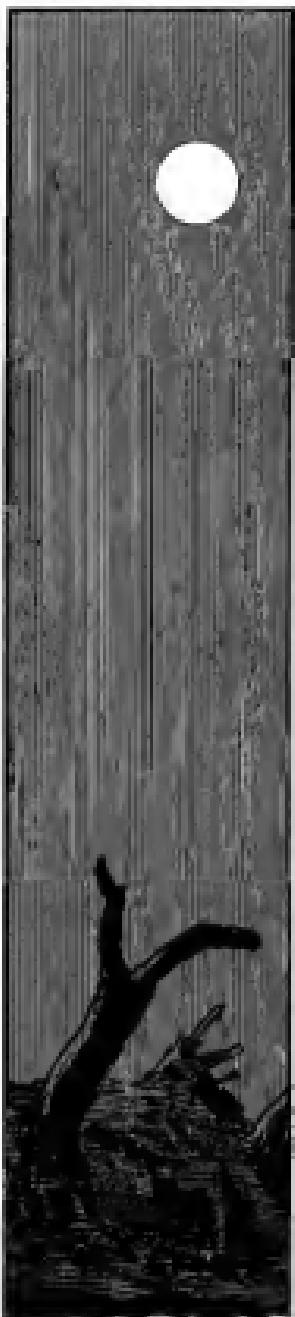


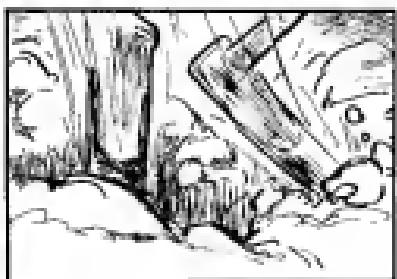








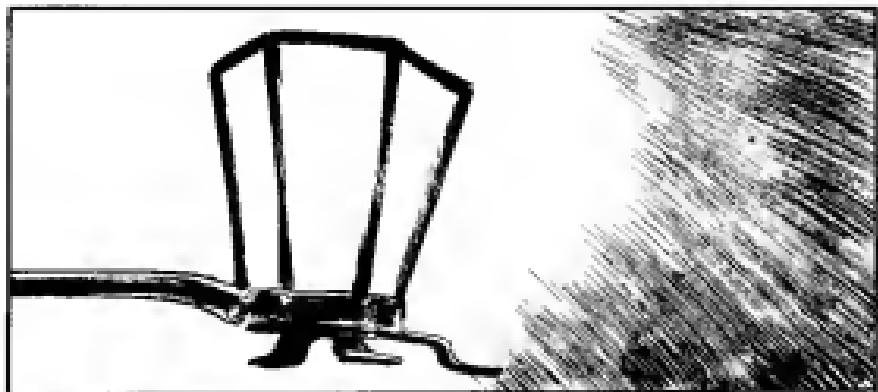












IT'S A REVERSE
LONG SWORD STROKE...
THE WORK OF A MASTER.
GARIBITO, I
PRESUME.

HAP...







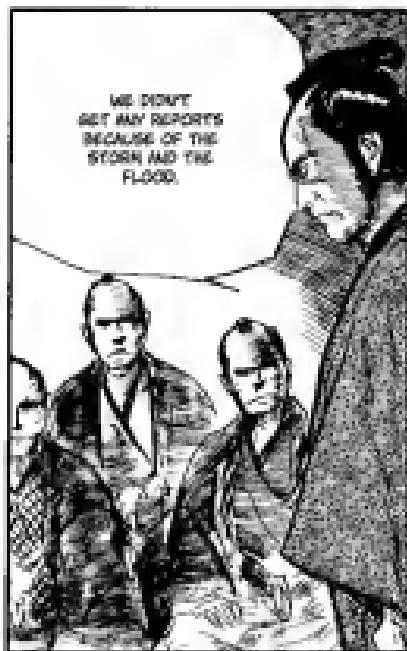
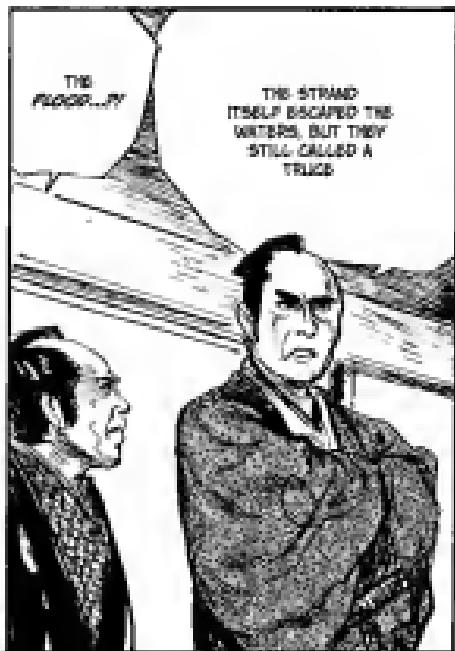
THE RATCHÖ STRAND'S A
LONELY PLACE, BUT YOUD
NEAR THE SORROWS AND
SWORDS FIGHT ACROSS
THE RIVER.

CONNECT
THE DOTS, GET
THE ANSWER.



FIRST,
LOOK AT THE
STATE OF THE
CORPSE.





SIR BETSUDO-SAMA
WAS RECENTLY TRIED BY
THE KIM COURT. HE'S
UNDER HOUSE ARREST
IN ABE-SAMA'S
QUARTERS.

HMM.

WHAT
DO WE
DO?

HMM...

THERE ARE
DAMN AWFUL
BODIES OUT
THERE, MR...

DADA.

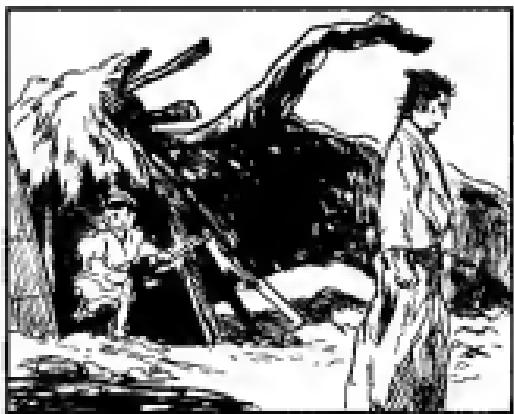
WE...WE LET
IT SLIDE. I SAW
IT BEFORE—
IT'S A PRIVATE
AFFAIR.

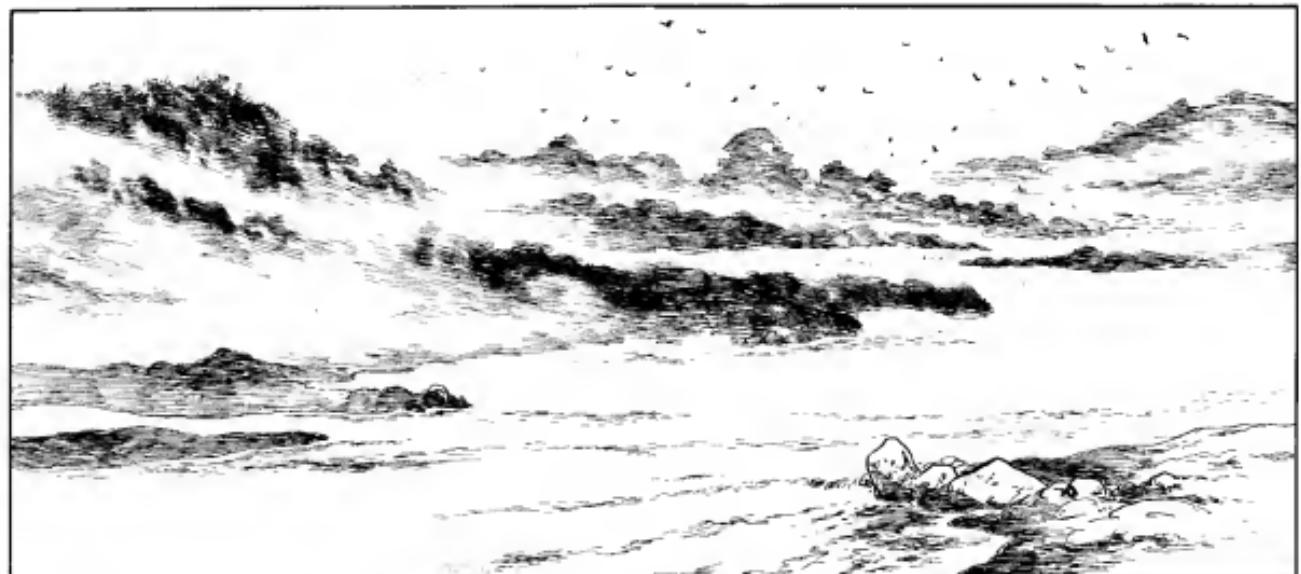
AND OUR
LORD HISSELF
TURNED IT
OVER TO
Abe-SAMA.

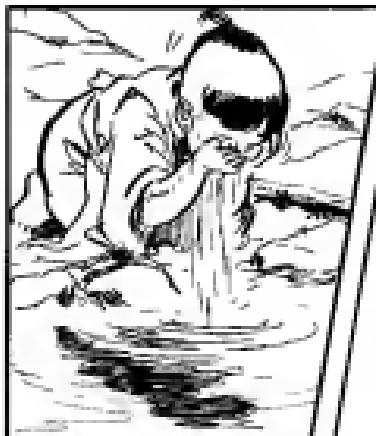
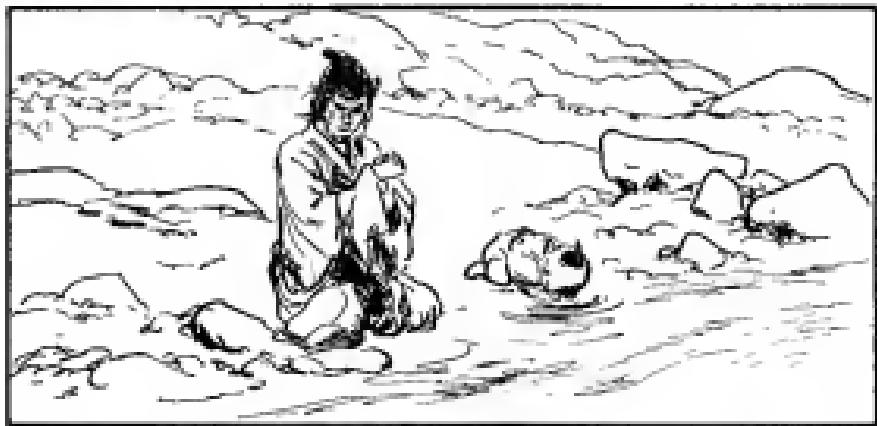
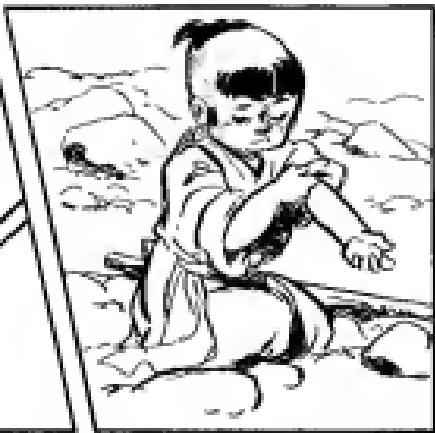
BUT KEEP
UP THE
WATCH!



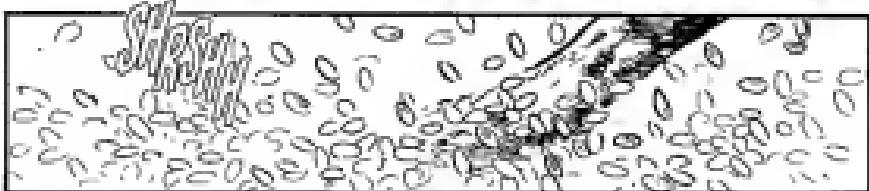
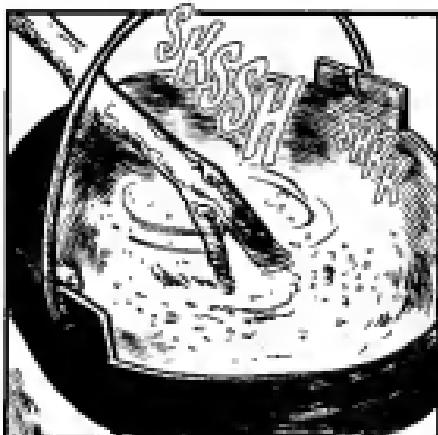


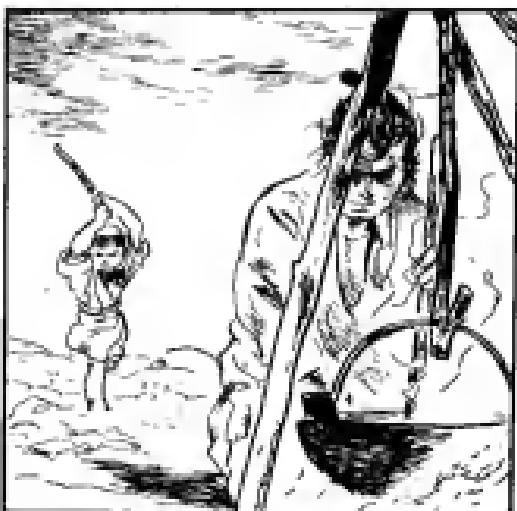


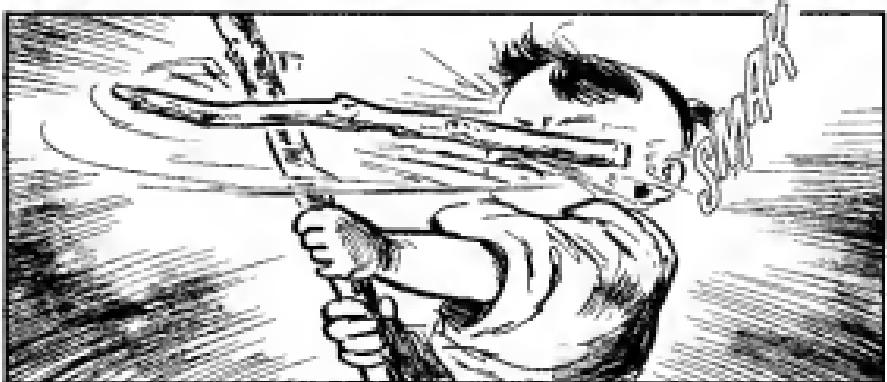
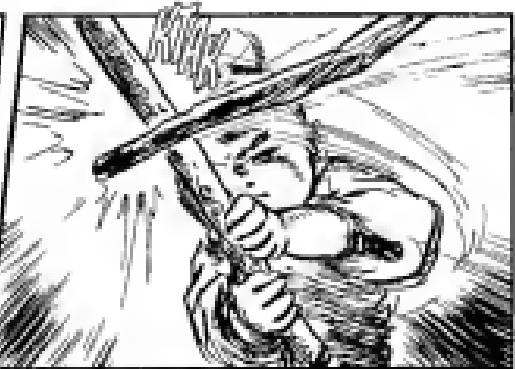


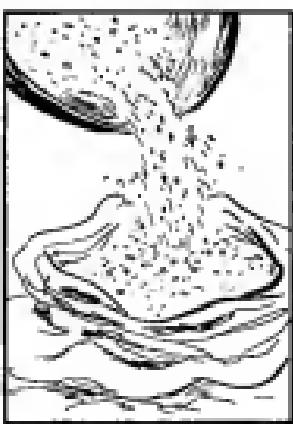




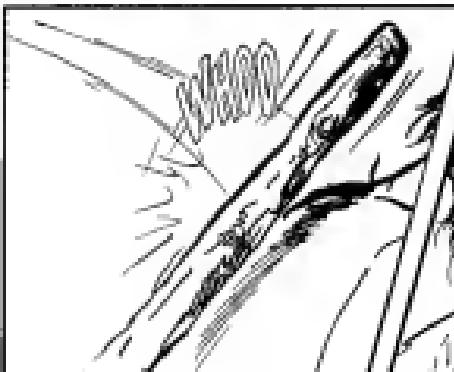






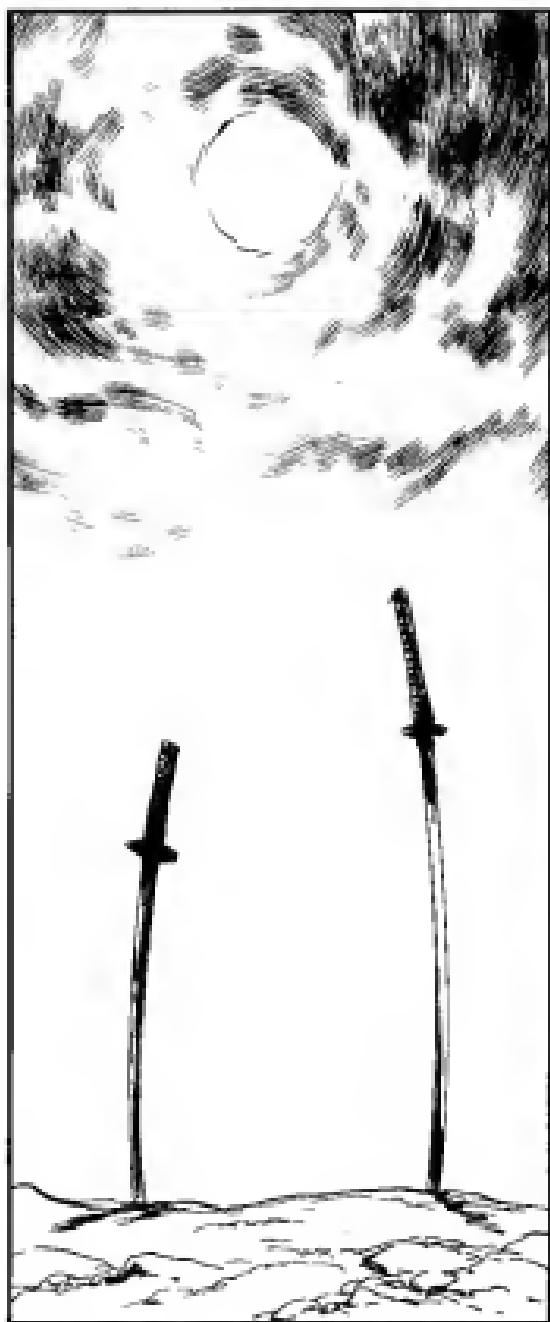














NONE CAN TELL THE FUTURE, BUT IF DISASTER STRIKES, TAKE THEM TO SAFETY. RETURN THEM WHEN IT'S OVER.

IF SOMEONE TRIES TO TAKE THEM, PEGI TAKE THEM FIRST.

GIVE THEM TO NO ONE.

YES...?



HERE—
THIS RICE
MILL LAST
TEN DAYS.

TOMORROW'S THE
ANP SAMMÔ-SAN FESTIVAL.
IT'S THE GREATEST OF ALL
OBSEVED BY THE SHÔGUN
FAMILY. THE FESTIVAL ENTERS
EDO CASTLE.

I WILL
GO IN WITH
THEIR

I NEED TO FIND
YAMATO RETSUZO. IF
HE'S ALIVE, I'LL
BRING HIM OUT.

SEVEN DAYS
SINCE OUR
PLEDGE.

SEVEN DAYS
SINCE HE SAW
HEDO HONOR IT
IN DEATH.

IT WAS
MUSEUM ETIQUETTE
TO TELL US, AND WE COULD
SIMPLY SIT AND WAIT. YET ONE
HONOR DEMANDS ANOTHER,
EVEN IF HE IS OUR
MORTAL ENEMY.



GLOSSARY

bugyō

A position combining the post of mayor and chief of police for a town, in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law. Rule was extended only to commoners.

bugyōsho

The office of the *bugyō*.

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushū

Another term for Musashi, the area encompassing most of the Kanto Plain around modern-day Tokyo.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

Edo

Edo was a castle town, that rose up around the moats and ramparts of Edo castle, the stronghold of

the Tokugawa clan. The central core of the city, administered by the *machi-bugyō* city commissioner, who reported directly to the shōgun's senior councilors, and was demarcated on official maps by a black line, the *karobiki*, and was called the *go-jinsei*.

Fudai daimyō

The inner circle of clans pledging allegiance to the Tokugawa. The *fudai* clans were Tokugawa allies even before Tokugawa Ieyasu's decisive victory of Sekigahara that launched the Tokugawa shogunate.

fusai

The central core of Edo (see *Edo*).

go-yō

Official business. As a lantern carried by the officers of the *darkan* magistrate, the equivalent of today's national police, or as the shout of the

police apprehending a criminal.	jisha bugyō Magistrate in charge of religious affairs.
"go-yō" was one of the most dreaded words in the world of Edo Japan's criminal elements.	
haizen-shū Servants for high officials.	jōjin A ninja leader
han A feudal domain.	jutsu A martial arts skill, especially the techniques of the ninja.
hanshi Samurai in the service of a <i>han</i> .	kamishimo Ceremonial outer garments.
Hachiman A widely worshipped folk deity of war.	kan 6 <i>shaku</i> , approximately 1.8 meters.
honorifics Japan is a class and status society and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes o and go, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in <i>Love Will Find a Way</i> and <i>Cast</i> :	Kannon Buddhist goddess of mercy.
<i>desu</i> – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures.	kendo The Japanese art of fencing with bamboo sticks.
<i>saw</i> – the most common, used among equals or near-equals.	
<i>sama</i> – used for superiors.	kokku A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a <i>han</i> 's wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.
<i>sensei</i> – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians.	machikata Town policemen

measurements

bu – approximately 3 millimeters.
sun – approximately 3 centimeters.
shaku – ten sun, approximately 30 centimeters.
ri – approximately 4 kilometers (2.5 miles).

mettsuke

inspector: A post combining the functions of chief of police and chief intelligence officer

mamu

From the Sanskrit *namavac*, "take refuge in the Buddha." A common prayer for the dead.

moroshi

Emergency signals in times of crisis, either fires or fireworks-like flares.

shihai

Master,

shinobi

A generic term for ninja, meaning "one who moves in secrecy." Ninja had their heyday in the time of warring states before the rise of the Tokugawa clan. Originally mercenaries

serving different warlords, by the Edo period they were in the service of the central government. The most famous shinobi were the ninja of Iga and Kaga, north of Kyoto. The Kurokuwa ninja that appear in *Love Wolf and Cub* were officially the laborers and manual workers in Edo Castle. Whether they truly served as a secret spy corps is lost in history.

shisan

"Perhaps in death"
(see vol. 24)

tatami

A thick mat woven of rice stalks, used as flooring

Tōshōgū

Tokugawa Ieyasu.

tozama daimyō

Less trusted daimyō of the outer circle. The *haw* in Saikoku (western Japan) were particularly restive.

wajo

A term of respect for a high priest or the head of a temple

GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibai*, or "paper-play" narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashu-kyo* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashu-kyo* readers.

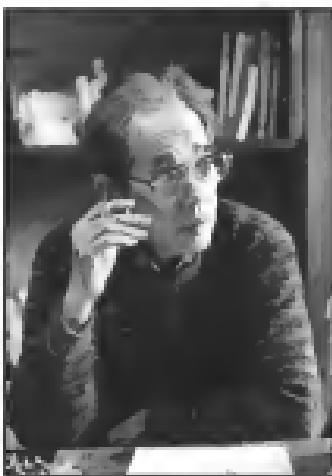
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Kuroi*

(Lover Wolf and Cub). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the "golden duo" and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kazuo Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and repainted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryosuke Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Seminar*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.





The mortal enemy of our main hero, Betsudo Yagyu has been imprisoned in Edo castle by the shogun. It seems the conniving poisoner, Abemo Kali, has exposed the Yagyu letter! And the warden is none other than the poisoner himself, determined to feed Betsudo the dose that will end his life in a pit of dishonor. But Yagyu has spies even in Edo castle, and a message is sent to his "grass," members of the clan hiding in secret, living as normal townspeople throughout Japan. It is up to them to give their lives in this final hour of desperate need. Meanwhile, Ito Ogami is living in a shack and training his little boy for the day when he must protect the battlefield with his own little hands. Still, two swords remain in this field of death, awaiting the two hands that will draw them from the soil and bring us closer to the end of our tale.

"There's a maturity found in Lone Wolf and Cub rarely found in American comics... This is a Kurosawa film with sex, drugs, corruption, wanton acts of violence, — and a really cute kid."

— Marc Bernardin
Entertainment Weekly

■ EISNER AWARD WINNER
■ HARVEY AWARD WINNER

GRAPHIC NOVEL / MANGA



浮城物語

Front cover artwork by
MATT WAGNER